

SELECTED LETTERS

WITH

BRIEF MEMOIR

OF

J. G. M'VICKER.

"Whose faith follow."

"For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith."

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H. A. RAYMOND, MANAGER.



Gave us his love
J. G. W. Vicker

PREFATORY NOTE.

THIS Volume contains more than two hundred letters, with brief extracts from others, written by the late J. G. M'Vicker. Some of these letters, addressed to his wife, show how he shared the things of God with her; others have been kindly supplied by friends. All have been carefully edited by Mr. Max Reich, who has also prepared a brief Memoir from Mr. M'Vicker's own notes.

Those who knew this departed servant of Christ will not fail to remember the uprightness and transparency which were marked features of his character. His memoir tells of his oft-renewed but vain efforts, as a young man designed for the ministry, to live a holy life, while yet a stranger to the grace which would have enabled him to fulfil his desire. His experience in this respect may be valuable to some who are in a similar position, and who would understand his strenuous endeavours to preserve a good conscience. These fruitless struggles continued after he had been ordained,

and only in the remarkable revival of 1859 did the light of God's salvation in Christ truly break in upon his heart, and lead to joyful service, even beyond his strength.

Later on he frankly confessed how sadly he had failed in the high path of faith which he aimed at in seeking to follow the Scriptures; but this only led to fuller knowledge of himself and of his Lord, and, profiting by his failure, his path became—like the shining light—brighter and brighter to the end.

Many who were familiar with his public addresses may not know how constantly his pen was in use to render valuable help to others, especially in matters in which he himself had previously made mistakes. He truly fulfilled the Lord's words to Peter: "When thou art converted strengthen thy brethren."

His warm expressions of sympathy and encouragements to unreserved confidence in the Lord, as well as warnings against trusting in one's own heart, and against the allowance of a sectarian spirit, will, we believe, make this Volume very helpful, and will doubtless attract many to turn to its pages again and again.

Editors of "ECHOES OF SERVICE."

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BRIEF MEMOIR.

JOHN GALWAY M'VICKER was born March 15th, 1826, in Belfast, N. Ireland. He always spoke of his parents as patterns of virtue and godliness. "My father," to use his own words, "was a very pious, wise, generous, kind and good-tempered man : no son could have a better." He was the fourth son of a large family, six brothers and six sisters coming after him, sixteen in all. Of his very early days there is but scant record. Here is the first :—

"My mother often told me that from childhood I was very fond of learning. I used to ask her the names of the letters and count over each in a corner till I knew them well. I believe I was sent to school when less than four years of age. I have a very vivid recollection of the first day I entered the school. I was dressed in petticoats, and Mr. Paisley (my teacher) took me up in his arms and put me on his desk before him. Being always fond of books, any pocket-money I got was spent in story-books, etc. I do not remember any of my school-fellows to whom I took any general liking when I was very young, except Wm. Armour, who died of consumption, and Hamilton Magee, a year or two before leaving school for college. On the whole I was, perhaps, fortunate in my teacher. His knowledge was neither very extensive nor very accurate, and I have since felt the great disadvantage of this, especially in the elements of my Latin and Greek. Still he was a man of considerable judgment and force of character, and was conscientious in performing his duty.

I remained with him till I went to College in November, 1841. He taught me English and a smattering of Greek and Latin, and I believe I was on the whole better prepared for entering College than many of the students of my year."

Of his experiences at College he writes :—

"I learned but little that first winter. I went to College with the idea that I was escaping from drudgery to independence, and I fully carried it out."

The year 1844 was important in the history of his youth. During the winter of that year he was first made sensible of the secret strivings of the Spirit of God with him, making him feel the vanity and emptiness of created things, and his need of a personal acquaintance with God as the secret of spiritual life and true rest of heart, as well as dominion over indwelling sin. Fifteen long years did the God who loved him wrestle with him, to bring him to the end of his natural activities and teach him to cling, in the simplicity of faith, to the One who had broken him down. It appears that many of the students of the College felt a strange visitation of God at that time. Among Mr. M'Vicker's papers we discover the following form of covenant, dated Nov. 5, 1844 :—

"Having been long devoted by my parents to God for the work of the ministry, and having lately had my thoughts turned to the importance of the duties which that office involves, and the necessity of personal piety for their proper discharge, I would here, through Jesus Christ my Saviour, solemnly dedicate myself to God. To Him I devote my time, my talents, my attainments, all that I am, and all that I have, and before Him whose eye rests on me while I write, I purpose, with all the solemnity of an oath, to make His glory the great object of my life ; and be it unto me according to His gracious word—
'and I will be to thee a God.'

JOHN GALWAY M'VICKER."

Yet did he confess at the age of thirty-three that what thus moved him, as a youth of eighteen, was still in the first birth, and not in the new, and his diary bears evidence that these impressions faded away, and that, notwithstanding their fervour and earnestness at the time, they left him without real inward power to gain any abiding victory over sin. For such is the deep way of God with souls, that no flesh may glory in His presence.

His diary during the years that followed is full of the groans and sighs of one who is vainly seeking to gain by struggles of self what can only be found by resting in Christ. He was still ignorant of the difference between man's order—*Conflict, Victory, Rest*, and God's way—*Believing, Rest, Victory*.

I turn over page after page in the closely-written books now before me, and everywhere it is the same story :—

“ ‘Sin advancing’ ; ‘Racked with doubts’ ; ‘How many sinful passions I indulge !’ ‘I often *almost* despair’ ; ‘Forgive my sins’ ; ‘Peculiarly cold and indifferent’ ; ‘Have I the true grace at all ?’ ‘My feeble remorse is no better than refined hypocrisy’ ; ‘O God, have pity on me !’ ”

Note the following as a specimen of many :—

“Jan. 14, 1845. Spent last Sabbath in the country. Such a Sabbath I hope never to pass again. Spent most of the afternoon in joking, and what even on a week-day would be almost sinful amusement. Must have done very much harm to others. O Father, canst Thou, wilt Thou, forgive me ? I shed many bitter tears, and sent up many earnest cries in the evening when I returned home. But even this I have turned into sin. I have felt myself looking back with complacency on my remorse, instead of anger and hatred at the sin which occasioned it. May God show me more of the wickedness of my heart, and the dreadful impurity of many of my motives.”

"Lord's-day, Jan. 26. Omitted these entries for many days, chiefly from unwillingness to compel my mind to look in on itself and confess how guilty and unchanged it is. . . . Oh that I could hate sin with a perfect hatred! Adams, in his private thoughts, says, 'I had rather be cast into the burning, fiery furnace, or the lion's den, than suffer sin to lie quietly in my heart.' I know I would be a liar if I were to say so: yet I sometimes think I would not for worlds offend such a God."

"Feb. 13. I spend a very unhappy life. The history of each day is—sinning and sorrowing; sorrowing and sinning. Preserve me, O God, from falling again into a course of undisturbed and open sin!"

"Feb. 24. Strange that I have detected myself in self righteousness. Solemnly do I believe that I pride myself on knowing that I am so wicked, and think myself better than others because I know I am worse."

We will not go on with these extracts; I have culled a few out of hundreds of a similar character. His conviction of sin grew with his efforts to be holy. Eventually he records:—

"It is evident that unless God Himself appears for my salvation, my ruin is sealed. I plead, I pray for His help."

Years after, when the struggle and storm had given place to a divinely-bestowed peace and calm, he wrote down the following reflections on his own records:—

"The reader may see how much I was in earnest: how correct were my doctrinal views as to Bible truth: how sincerely I endeavoured to perform what I knew were the Scriptural duties of prayer, meditation, contrition for sin, faith in God, etc.; and yet all the time, and for many years after, I was entirely devoid of spiritual life. The fatal mistake I made was that I thought by means of religious efforts and duties to make myself better, and that then I could draw comfort and satisfaction from the improvement I would be

conscious of in myself. God's love for me as I was, Christ's death for me as I was, the Spirit's power to keep and sanctify me, these had not been received into my heart with an inward certainty of their truth. I began building at the roof instead of the foundation. I sought the fruit before the living sap had begun to flow."

The consequence of such useless efforts is thus expressed :

"For years I hated the very thought of personal religion ; I thought I had done my best, and, as I had failed, of what avail would it be to renew the attempt ? "

He tried to drown useless regrets in hard study and diligent teaching, and lived, he confesses, "entirely without God and in much sin."

In 1847, in spite of the strong opposition of his parents, he thought he would give up the plan of becoming a minister. He felt no inward call to such a work, and shrank from preaching about an experience and a life to which he feared his own heart was a stranger.

Accordingly, in March, 1848, he went to America, thinking that he could more easily effect this change there than at home. The journey from Belfast to New York, in a sailing ship, lasted fifty-two days, which he filled up with much reading. He read the entire New Testament and much of the Old. In America he was persuaded by a minister of the same religious body to which he then belonged to be licensed by an ecclesiastical court to preach the Gospel, of which he knew indeed "the letter," but of whose "life and essence" he was "entirely ignorant." Let us hear his comment on this step :—

"If anyone desires to fling a stone at me for this, I own that I well deserve it. But let me say to him before he flings it that I had no knowledge of what I was doing ; it was done

'ignorantly, in unbelief.' *I had never met any person who asked me if I was born again, or who told me that he knew God had saved him. I thought that others were like myself, struggling and doubting; that possibly those hard struggles of 1845-6 were a sign that the root of the matter was in my soul after all, and that after a while I might reach firmer ground and clearer light. If the hand that lifts the stone against me be that of a minister, is he quite sure that he is not himself what I then was, an unconverted man who knew it not, and would have been very angry if anyone had told me what I really was? Indeed, I would have been ready enough to denounce the sin of unconverted men preaching a Saviour whom they did not themselves know. The true Christian who knows the awful deceitfulness of his own heart will own that it is by the grace of God that he has not fallen into the same or a similar sin."*

After preaching in America for more than a year, he returned to Ireland in 1850, was married in October of the same year, and "ordained" a minister of a congregation in December.

Many were his exercises to live up to his high position. He drew up no less than thirteen rules of conduct for himself. He was to spend six hours daily in close study; **F**our, except on Saturday, in pastoral visitation; never lie; never omit secret or family prayer twice each day; **S**trive by study, practice, prayer, and earnestness to excel in preaching; rise each morning at 5 o'clock; try to cure himself of fretfulness, anger, and obstinacy; never speak angrily to his wife; be moderate in eating and drinking; write out each evening a journal of the day's work and form a plan for the morrow; and he was to read these resolutions every morning and pray for grace to keep them. But thus he laments:—

"Alas, how little I knew of myself, or of the only way in which a lost sinner can be delivered from the power of sin and

enabled to serve God ! The very first week saw several of my resolutions broken, and when I found them of no use I soon entirely disregarded them."

In 1853 he began his ministerial duties at Cullybackey, three miles from Ballymena. His income there not being sufficient to keep him out of debt, he threatened his congregation with resignation if his salary was not increased. On this he remarks in his diary :—

" I have been since accused of shewing a love for money in this affair. Of the whole of my position then as an unconverted minister, and as one paid a salary to preach, I am thoroughly ashamed. But remaining in it, I do not yet see what other course I could have taken."

The reader may naturally wish to know whether his convictions of sin returned during the years that followed his ordination, and whether he at all renewed his struggles after peace and holiness, and his efforts to reach solid ground on which to rest his soul for eternity. Anticipating these questions, he writes :—

" My convictions of sin frequently returned ; I had no settled peace with God ; I could not manage my own temper and appetites, or carry out steadily any resolutions of amendment ; sometimes I neglected secret prayer entirely ; at other times conscience made me practise it, or inward distress drove me to it ; but at no time had I any certainty that a real God heard what I was saying or any sureness that He would give me what I asked. I had to study the Bible for my sermons, and to prepare for my Bible class, and often I commenced to read it through because I felt that I ought ; but I had no inward love for it, and could never carry out my plans of reading it through, longer than a few weeks. I much preferred in my heart the few novels that from time to time came within my reach, or the historical or mathematical books that I possessed or borrowed."

But few records of those years were preserved by him. He owns that he had no love for prayer, no love for souls, no love for visiting in the service of God. He says :—

“ I would rather bite off my tongue than talk experimental religion to my wife ; she is, I fear, no more a Christian than I am ; I can hardly write it, but I daresay that if we were to die to-night she and I would awake in hell. Is that true ? And I a Gospel minister ! ”

In spite of these struggles going on within,

“ There was no true turning to God for help ; *no living union formed between the soul and the Lord Jesus.* ”

We come now to the wonderful year of 1859, of which we will let his own record speak :—

“ I do not remember at what time in the spring of 1859 I was told of remarkable conversions taking place a few miles from my home. But I recall distinctly the feeling of satisfaction and hope with which I heard of them. The sure, realized, personal salvation in which the converts were said to be rejoicing, seemed the very thing my soul had been longing after for many years. So, without even waiting to hear the preachers, I invited some of them to preach in our meeting-house. Vast crowds gathered ; a larger house in the same village was kindly opened to receive them, and from that time all through the summer I was much and earnestly engaged in the work to which this gave rise. It may be asked how I could take a lead in revival meetings, and in dealing with anxious souls, when I had no certainty of my own salvation. Did I never feel embarrassed in conversing with the earnest men who conducted the meetings, or the young converts who were rejoicing in a new-found Saviour ? Yes, often. Once I remember going with my wife to see a young woman who had recently been converted, and both of us were much impressed with the joy that beamed from her face. On our way home I said, ‘ Well, if that is conversion, I know nothing about it. ’ When we reached home we knelt at the bedside.

I prayed : ' Lord, if we are already Christians make us sure of it ; and if we are not, Lord, make us Christians.' I am certain God heard and answered that prayer.

" Still, as a minister, and as one who believed in the reality of conversion, and that this was what was taking place in the meetings, I never thought of holding back from taking a prominent part in the work. I hardly remember whether I half thought I might be converted and only needed assurance, or half hoped I might myself get a blessing as the meetings went on, but I threw myself into them heartily.

" On Lord's-day, June 26, I was from home assisting another minister in what was called ' dispensing ' the Lord's Supper to his congregation. He had preached the opening sermon, and part of the people were seated at the table, I among them, while he gave us an address. I have no remembrance of the subject on which he spoke, or of anything he said, except a single verse. He quoted Col. i. 19, '*It pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell.*' This was the ' word of life ' to me—the chink through which the light of God streamed into my soul. No strong emotion was excited at the time. A little beam of sunshine seemed to come out from the very presence of God into the depths of my soul. The Spirit of God gave my inmost heart a glimpse of the true meaning of salvation by grace, through faith in the Lord Jesus. A voice without any words seemed to say to me : ' The toil and struggle of years is ended at last ; cease from this vain effort to amend yourself, which is nothing else than salvation by works ; God loves you as you are ; He gives you His Son Jesus as you are ; Jesus put your sins away by dying for them ; all fulness now dwells in Him ; you have only to receive out of His fulness, and live on Him by faith all the rest of your life.'

" I daresay I could before that time have read over these lines which I have just written, and assented to them, without seeing anything in them fitted to lead me into an entirely new principle of standing before God, and of life. Others may read them now with the same feelings. But it is one thing

to assent to truth ; it is another for the Holy Spirit to reveal it in life-giving power to one's inmost soul. I rose from the table with a kind of sunny feeling in my heart, but quite unaware of the greatness of the gift which I had, in germ at least, received from God. It was not till I returned home, on Tuesday or Wednesday, that the greatness and certainty of this gift filled me with unutterable joy.

"I do not care to speak of the peculiar experience of the days and nights that followed my return. But as I wish to give a full and faithful narrative, I cannot pass it over in silence. When I went to bed, on the night of my coming home, I seemed to have the presence and glory of God in a very wonderful way opened up to my soul : *the Son dwelling in the bosom of the Father having in Him my life, and the life of every believer, and the Holy Spirit bringing that life continually into the believing soul.* I could convey in no words the sense of divine love and joy that poured in torrents through my very being. After lying for some hours in this enjoyment of God, I fell asleep, though I trembled to do so lest I should awake and find the brightness gone. But in the morning it was still the same. My wife and niece were in Belfast, so that I was alone day and night. The joys of those days and nights would hardly be believed. Often, with tears flowing from my eyes, I cried out, ' If this be earth, what will heaven be ? ' "

On Saturday he stood up in the village green, on the same spot where a few weeks before he had opposed an evangelist who proclaimed the assurance of salvation, to tell the people that the evangelist was right, and that he had himself been in the dark. He shewed them from the Scriptures that Christians knew their sins forgiven, and warned them against the lifeless Christianity that gave the soul no certainty of God's love. His narrative continues :—

" On the Lord's-day I tried to preach about ' the unsearchable riches of Christ.' But I was too weak, and my emotions

too strong to enable me to do so at any length. I went^{*} on connectedly and with help from God till I began to speak of the fulness of Christ; then I became overpowered. 'Oh, the fulness, the fulness!' Some of the congregation, fearing that I would be injured by over-excitement, came up into the pulpit and asked me to proceed no further at that time. I felt that they were right, and closed at once. Some of the elders offered prayer, and the much-moved congregation separated."

The next day he went to Belfast to attend the highest court of the ecclesiastical body with which he was connected. The Spirit of God had already taught him the *oneness of all believers*, but here was a religious body which was other than "the body of Christ." He felt he could not cleave to both, and made this avowal in the Synod: "The Church is one: it consists of all whom the Holy Ghost has quickened and joined to Jesus Christ as their living Head in heaven. What a frightful thing then to tear this living body of Christ in pieces!"

He requested to have his signature withdrawn from the "Scotch" documents, which formed the basis of the ecclesiastical system of which he was a minister, till he had more fully considered them. This was granted, though he still continued officially the minister of the congregation at Cullybackey.

Another result of his conversion was the place the Holy Scriptures *at once* took in his conscience. They became a divinely-given and accredited test of all he had hitherto held and practised, and he was prepared to deal honestly with them. Thus he saw immediately the Hope of the Bride of the Lamb, the Coming again of her Lord, as the great Event to expect in *our* life-time, and to control our affections and conduct here below. The Bible alone opened up this glorious hope to his inner eye.

He saw also that "seat rents were contrary to James ii.

2-4, that one who serves Jesus Christ should be able to trust Him for daily bread without depending on men for a salary." This led almost immediately to his refusing to draw the salary he once considered indispensable, though he as yet permitted a box to be placed at the door on Lord's-days to receive the offerings of the Lord's people for the ministry.

Another matter that gave him concern was his having insured his life for £400, to be paid on his reaching his sixty-fifth year or at his death. He felt he could not have a common fund with unconverted people—some of whom were openly ungodly—to provide against a common danger. He said to himself:—

"This would be bearing false witness against my heavenly Father. Besides, how could I trust Him to give me a sum every year to treasure up for old age or death, when the Lord has expressly forbidden those who live a life of faith to lay up treasure on earth?"

Therefore, with his wife's hearty concurrence, he sold his policy.

The light became even brighter and clearer as he abandoned himself to its safe and holy guidance. The mixture of converted and unconverted at the Lord's table troubled him much, though the subject of infant baptism had not as yet given him any serious thought, and he still retained the exclusive use of Old Testament psalms for New Testament worship, one of the traditions of the denomination he had been brought up in. The subject of *ordination*, too, was brought to the test of revealed truth. He asks:—

"What is ordination? Those who laid hands on my head professed to give me authority to preach, and to administer sacraments. Whence did they receive this authority? From

those who laid hands on *their* heads. And whence did *they* receive it? I went back thus till I came to the first set of Protestant ministers. If they were 'ordained' at all, they were 'ordained' by Popish bishops. And could Popish bishops confer a commission on Christ's ambassadors? If not, the whole fabric resting on this rotten foundation falls to the ground."

Interesting circumstances led him after this to investigate the teaching of the Holy Scriptures on the subject of infant baptism. He was then brought in contact with one James M'Quilkin, as he went to preach some nine miles from home. The conversion of this young man, through a lady who had been baptized as a believer, had been the beginning of the remarkable Revival of '59, when the whole of the North of Ireland was shaken by the mighty power of God, and lands far beyond it were reached by this wonderful visitation of grace. James M'Quilkin was a man of remarkable faith, and mighty in prayer.

Together they began to search the Scriptures on the subject of baptism, for James M'Quilkin was also exercised about it. They spent most of a day carefully seeking to know the mind of God, often on their knees, with their Bibles in their hands, asking light. At last, after they had gone over all that bore on the subject in the Old and New Testaments, they were both as certain as they could be of any revealed truth, that Christians only ought to be baptized, and that neither of them was a Christian till he was born of God's Holy Spirit. Mr. M'Vicker's diary adds:—

"I remember saying to him at the close, 'Well, there is not the breadth of my nail for infant baptism to rest on in the whole Bible.' 'No,' said he, 'there is nothing.' 'Then,' said I, 'God helping me, I will be baptized.'"

The following reflections will be found of value :—

“Some may be ready to inquire whether such a thing as being baptized was worth all this thought, and greater still, worth all the disputes and hindrances to the preaching of the gospel and the conversion of souls which were certain to spring from it. I can truly say that this often occurred to me at the time. But I saw that as a soldier is not responsible for the consequences of obeying his general's orders, but only for his obedience, so a Christian must do what he finds written in the Word and leave the results with God. Would usefulness gained by disobedience be thankworthy with God ? ”

A day or two after he was fully persuaded that none but believers should be baptized, a minister of his acquaintance met him in Ballymena and said he had heard that he was “a good deal shaken on the subject of baptism.” Mr. M'Vicker told him what conviction his examining the Scriptures of truth had produced, and concerning their interview writes as follows :—

“He intreated me to consider how difficult the subject was, how many excellent men had differed about it, what harm the introduction of controversy into the neighbourhood would be sure to do, and asked me to promise now to let the whole thing alone for twelve months. ‘Do you know what the conscience of a Christian man is,’ said I, ‘that you would ask me to promise to disobey God for a twelvemonth ?’ ‘Then six months.’ ‘I would rather,’ I answered, ‘if a block were placed in that street, lay my head on it, and let it be taken off, than promise to live in disobedience to God for six months.’ ‘Oh,’ said he, ‘I see you are too far gone.’ ”

At the earliest opportunity, the following week, Jeremiah Meneely baptized him and a brother from Belfast in the river Main, not far from his home. Two others were the only spectators, for he wished to avoid everything like a scene ; all he desired was quietly to obey God.

The Ecclesiastical Court, assembling in his own meeting-house, declared him forthwith outside their communion, and thus the link that bound him to his congregation was severed. He writes, "This left me with my wife and child without any support but God."

With gratitude to God he records the admirable way in which his wife behaved in these trying circumstances :—

"She simply told me, no matter what the result would be, to do what I believed to be God's will. And through all that followed she never uttered a complaint."

To pay off a debt he owed to a relative ever since he was married, he sold his furniture and books. He had the great satisfaction of paying everything he owed before the week was out, but it left him only about £2 as his whole earthly store. "Thank God," he writes, "I have never been in debt since."

After the house was emptied he went with his little family to his father's house in Belfast. The Evangelical Alliance was meeting there at that time, and he sought among those attending the meetings one who, he thought, might perhaps point out to him some field of labour for Christ, for he had not then the slightest intention of ever returning to Ballymena. On the Lord's-day he met with a little company of Christians in Antrim, who assembled every first day of the week to break bread in remembrance of the Lord Jesus.

Mrs. Colville, the lady already referred to as the honoured instrument of God in leading to Christ the first-fruits of the great awakening of '59, was the one who helped him to return to the sphere of his former "ministerial" labours. "Have you," she enquired, "an open door at Ballymena?" "Yes, a good many thereabouts would be ready to hear the Word of God from me," was the reply. "Then," said

she, "if you close a door that God has opened, take care lest He refuse to open you one elsewhere." He prayed and thought much over these words. The result was that on Saturday, September 24th, he had it announced as widely as he could that he would preach somewhere in the town next day.

Not being able to obtain a large room or hall for preaching in, our dear brother commenced his work on these new lines in the street, and on the first day of the week joined a little company of Christians who met in a private house to remember the Lord's death.

Soon after, a large stable-yard was offered him, unasked, for his meetings, and for four Lord's-days he preached in it to large numbers. Then a large loft was used for this purpose, which was furnished with seats for 400 people, and thus he went on till May of next year. He says :—

"I had only a few shillings over £1 when I came; but I knew that God had not led me into the wilderness to let me perish of want. He had promised me food and clothing; and His Word was surer than heaven and earth put together. . . . I had left all the little that I had for the sake of the Lord and His Word, literally not knowing whither I went or how I would be provided for, but knowing well that I was following and trusting One who would never suffer me to want. How wonderfully He kept His promises and exceeded my expectations!"

But now we are obliged to hear another story. Faithfully does our beloved brother record the following chapter of his experiences, humbling though they are; and though one naturally hesitates to refer to this part of his life, the conviction that he has preserved the record of it for the help and guidance of his fellow-servants, impels me to include some extracts in this Memoir. He writes :—

"I had laboured incessantly in preaching since July, and at

the beginning of the year 1860 my brain and nervous system began to give indications that they were suffering from the overstrain that had been put upon them. I sank into lowness of spirits. The joy that had filled my heart for months began to fade. Old desires and ways of thinking and feeling, the workings of the incurable old nature within me, sprang up again into strength. I was terribly perplexed. It was what I ought to have been prepared for ; but I had been too much occupied with teaching and preaching to advance in the knowledge of truth in my own soul, and this dismal part of the pilgrim's path, with its terrifying sights and sounds, took me unawares. I began to feel that I had been deceiving myself, that I had only enjoyed some remarkable operations of God's Spirit *short of conversion*, and that, having fallen away afterwards, I was in the state in which, according to Heb. vi., it was impossible to renew me again to repentance. So great was my distress that I had to leave home for more than two months.

"During this time of darkness, things which had been as clear as mid-day before became altogether indistinct. I lost my faith in God in regard to temporal things. My wicked heart said to me that I had cast away all my prospects and lost all my friends. I saw that the members of the church were in general very poor, and I feared that, after the first burst of excitement was over, brethren in other places would cease sending me money, and then, cast on a few poor people, how was I to exist ? Alas, alas ! I left GOD entirely out of my calculations."

' Thus for a time our dear brother gave up his high path, became an agent of a society, and, listening to the advice of an unconverted friend; began to collect subscriptions for building a Baptist chapel in the town, his friend offering for himself and two others £100 to head the list. He went round the town asking help from all who would give it, whether they were children of God or not. But the hand of His merciful Father laid him low with a very severe illness, so that for several months he was confined to bed,

being part of the time in much suffering and on the very verge of death. Not yet, however, was his inner ear opened to the lesson such discipline was designed to teach, and directly he rose from his sick bed he resumed his collecting, concerning which he records as follows :--

"I remember going in company with my friend, to a rich, ungodly man to ask a subscription. He took us both for business men, and in replying to our application used several oaths. I felt greatly shocked, reproved him for swearing, and got no subscription. But what a state of heart I was in, when I, a servant of Jesus Christ, could stand hat in hand before such a man, asking him to give me money for my Master's work, and hear him blaspheming God's name without feeling shocked enough to give up such a Christ-dishonouring course. I persevered, however, till the building was erected. God saw that I needed a public and permanent monument of my unbelief and backsliding, if by any means I might be humbled and kept cleaving to Himself. I am ashamed to remember that tickets of admission to the opening services were sold at 1s. each, and persons were asked to collect solely because they were men of means, and likely to give, and influence others to give, liberally. Toward the end of that year I asked a nobleman who held Baptist sentiments to preach in the chapel, and, thinking his presence would be a good opportunity for gaining a kind of footing among the ministers of the town, I invited them to come and hear him. One of them published his refusal in the local newspaper ; I replied through the same channel, and a controversy ensued in which I manifested a very unChristlike spirit, as well as an utter want of the peculiar powers needed for newspaper controversy."

Catholicity of spirit was an outstanding feature in Mr. M'Vicker's character, and his letters breathe the fragrance of this. It was his joy to own with gratitude every real labourer in the cause of truth, whatever might be the measure of the light that had dawned upon him. For

himself, indeed, he felt it was a serious backward step that he had, even for a time, come down to a position below that standard of truth which he had learnt to approve of; yet, while acknowledging his own failure, he did not sit in judgment upon his fellow-servants, nor was it his wont to do so.

It was just after the events recorded above that it pleased God to restore to His servant all the closeness and brightness of his former communion. He ever afterwards spoke of it as like a second conversion, though it differed from the first in this, among other things, that it was not accompanied by the extraordinary illumination of that former season. This time the Holy Spirit led him to lean simply on the bare Word of God. "Of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, *who of God is made unto us . . . sanctification,*" was the portion used to lead him back into the light. To quote his own words,

"He made me feel in my inmost heart that all I needed for present and life-long salvation was in Jesus Christ, and that God gave all that to me simply on the ground that I was a lost and helpless sinner, and I felt *as sure* of this as I was of my own existence, or of the Being of God Himself. I recall with great thankfulness the peculiar sweetness of the joy in God that sustained me in the midst of much reproach and evil-speaking, to which my foolish letters in the newspapers had exposed me.

"But when a child of God has got into a wrong position and wrong surroundings, fresh spiritual light is sure to bring trouble with it. For the light exposes the evil of his ways, and he must either judge and alter his ways or lose the light. So I found it."

Directly his communion with God was fully restored his mind became exercised about the following points :—

"(1) Is it right for me to receive part of my support from the Irish Baptist Society ?

"(2) Is it right for me to be regarded as *the* pastor of the church, when, owing to the great distances at which the members live, I cannot exercise sufficient oversight over them all ?

"(3) Is it right for me to preside at the Lord's Supper and to conduct the meeting to the exclusion of all others ? "

The following comment appears in his diary on the first of these three points :—

"From May 1st, 1860, till Dec. 25th, 1861, the Committee in the most generous way, and without any conditions of any sort, had given me at the rate of £120 a year. As the church was then able to do something for my support, I felt ashamed to go on drawing as largely as at the first on the funds of the society. I therefore voluntarily gave up £60 a year at the close of 1861."

Eventually he left the Society altogether to return to the simple path of faith he had abandoned in an hour of temptation, and then discovered that, poor as the people were among whom he laboured in those early years, the notion that he was aided by a society "had dried up their liberality, and hindered the blessing which through greater liberality they would receive." He also felt that believers generally in the neighbourhood needed a practical example of trusting in the living God, which, while he continued to depend on a society, it was impossible for him to give. By the step he took he sought to encourage self-denial for the cause of Christ.

He was quite prepared for trials as the result of the giving up of this money. But, as he puts it :—

"(1) God has said 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.' He will give grace for meeting any trial.

"(2) He will render the trials we may encounter means of revealing to us more of His love and faithfulness, of making us walk closer to Him, and of strengthening our faith.

"(3) He will never suffer us to want, for He has said : ' They that seek the Lord shall not want any good ' ; and again, Christ has said—in words exactly applying, and meant to apply, to the present case—' Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all *these* things (food and clothing) shall be added unto you.' And though I can see no human likelihood of being sustained, I bless God He has enabled me to believe that He can and will keep His word, and I thank Him heartily that He has given the same confidence to my dear wife."

Thus began a new chapter in Mr. M'Vicker's history, and his path grew in brightness until the perfect day.

The following extracts from his diary will shew the progress of his spiritual life :—

"1862, *May* 12th.—Rose this morning at 6 o'clock, and have risen about that hour for several months. This too is the Lord's mercy. No one thing cost me so much as trying to acquire the habit of rising early, yet it was in vain. I see that none but God can break a bad habit or give a good one, and that we obtain power by believing prayer. May He keep me ever waiting on Him for continuance in this, and even for advancement. I see no reason why I should not rise at 5 o'clock, except that my frequent evening meetings hinder my getting to bed as early as that would require. That too, however, the Lord can order for me if He desire it. To-day I mean to spend some time in preparing for next Lord's-day ; then to write letters, then to visit a number of brethren in town, and reach the evening prayer-meeting at 8 o'clock.

"19th.—The Lord kept me closer to Him last week than the week before. I could tell no one what a happiness it is to know and love God and keep up communion with Him. His favour is verily life, and His lovingkindness better than life. God of love and mercy, uphold me ; give me my work, and help me to do it faithfully *in Him* who is my life, and *for Him* who loved me and gave Himself for me !

"26th.—I preached last night near Antrim. There I met a

dear brother called Plunkett, with whom I had very sweet Christian fellowship. He gave me an account of his conversion, which was most interesting. He seems to share the views of the moderate 'brethren,' from whom indeed I do not very materially differ in judgment, so we got on very pleasantly together, only so much difference of judgment appearing as gave our conversation interest. He is a very sweet and holy man, from intercourse with whom no Christian could help deriving profit and delight. He spoke with much loving power at the meeting. . . . Oh how gracious is the Lord in continuing to supply my necessities! The liberality of the brethren has been very considerably increased since my connection with the society ceased, and therein I trust they are receiving a blessing.

"*June 13th.*—Was again made glad in driving with G. L. (who is in fellowship with us, and of whom I stood in doubt) to find that he is really standing and growing in the grace of God. He has lately had opened to him very clear views of Jesus as his sanctification, and is really drawing from Him his daily life. He has true peace and spiritual joy. I have here first-fruits of answers to two prayers that I have much pressed on God—the conversion of sinners and the advancement of believers in spirituality. I thank God. May He encourage me by this to hang on Him for a thousandfold more!

"On the whole, though very imperfect, this week has been an advance on the one before it. I have been able to keep closer communion with God, but oh, how far am I from having already attained or being already perfect! What will it be to be in heaven!

"*July 28th.*—What peace and joy I continue to have in the Lord! What an infinite good has life become to me! My heart rests in an unclouded assurance of God's love for me, revealed in the cross of Christ. I know that there is a living God, and that cross tells me that He has 'goodwill to men.' If others do not choose to believe this they may have their choice. I DO, in the very profoundest depths of my soul, and rest on it as one of the most certain verities in the universe,

The way in which I expect Him to shew His goodwill is not merely in taking away my guilt, but in helping me to overcome corruption, and making me a perfectly holy man in Christ Jesus. I am as sure that He *can* do this as that He can keep His sun shining or my heart beating. I see that in the fulness of Christ, and in the union of believers to Him, He has provided means for doing it, and the cross and His own Word make me certain *that He will*. My vileness is no reason on the other side. The virulence of an ulcer is no argument against believing that a tender-hearted physician, who has taken immense pains to provide an infallible cure for that very class of ulcers, will heal it.

“*Aug. 18th.*—Spent most of the morning reading scriptures on ministry, being determined by God’s blessing, to tell the church all the Lord has taught me on the subject. Every day I become more thoroughly sick of clericalism, and more settled in the liberty that all saints have to minister to the church, as God has given them the measure of faith. The Lord, who has hitherto guided and kept us, lead us to oneness of mind on this important and delicate subject, for our dear Head’s sake! I think there will be difference of judgment, but trust it will gradually give way. What I fear far more is that unqualified brethren should abuse their liberty, and weary the church of her freedom, and make her regret her escape out of the bondage of her dependence on one man. O God, the issue is in Thy Name; bring it to pass! . . . I bless God from my very heart for the settled and growing peace in the Lord Jesus which He is giving me. I know, amid my many imperfections, what *rest* is, and oh, how blessed it is! I look back with horror and thankfulness on the weary, weary years, before I knew the Lord, and can sometimes hardly believe that I am really escaped; but, thank God, I *am*. Oh that I could only witness more faithfully for the dear Lord who has rescued me!

“*Sept.*—I hear that — is doing his utmost to hinder us from getting a lease for our chapel, in consequence of the church’s position on the question of ministry. In the time of

my backsliding I was closely associated with this unconverted man in getting this chapel built ; now the Lord is chastising me through him for this sin. The Lord direct us wisely ! Oh if it would please Him to save him ! He is one of the kindest friends I have, to whom I owe very many acts of the greatest friendliness, and I grieve in my heart that anything has come to disappoint and alienate him ; but God has saved me to do His will, and to please no one can I depart from that one hair's breadth.

“ *Nov. 4th.*—The visit of Miss H. (from London) has been an era in my religious life. She has been in the Lord for twenty years, and is deeply taught in God's Word. Her being led here at this time was very wonderful. For the last ten days she has been brought into a wonderful nearness to God, and new truths flash into her soul. When she considers any passage of Scripture, fresh light breaks in as from God, and she is continually filled with holy joy. She sleeps little and often forgets her meals ; her delight is to speak of the deep, spiritual truths God is showing her. Her state reminds me very much of my own experience just after my conversion, except that, being far more deeply taught in the Scriptures and more intimately acquainted with the Lord, she is able to derive far more profit from this spiritual light than I was. It is not possible to describe the intimate and delightful communion of soul I had with her ; it seemed a foretaste of the blessedness of the communion of the redeemed in heaven. How deeply thankful it has made me that the nearer anyone is to God, the more deeply drinking into the Spirit, the more at home I feel in the companionship of such a one. Though not so near the great Light as she is now, I was able to understand her experience, and to delight in the thoughts she was receiving. Why have I not this light still ? Alas, I am afraid I really quenched the Spirit ; but if it is God's will, and for His glory, He can restore it ; and this visit has created in me a deep longing that He will do so. May I be kept from desiring it for self-exaltation ! Break, crush self in me, O Lord, but fill me with Thy Spirit !

"12th.—I cannot write down here the inexpressible nearness to the Lord and delight in Him which I enjoy. . . . Since the wonderful blessedness I enjoyed at my conversion I have never been so happy. A very special and remarkable gift for teaching was bestowed on me by the Spirit of God, helping me in a very wonderful way to open up Scripture and give it life and power ; wonderful I mean in contrast with my former way of doing, and in the suddenness with which it was bestowed. Several times the same gift has since been granted to me when in very close communion with God, and a measure of it remains with me permanently. If the Lord is pleased to keep me very near to Him, as I hope, more than all I ever had of this gift will, I trust, be continued to me.

"I had also several times during this period a wonderful power given me of ascertaining the mind of God. On some of these occasions, I can scarcely tell whether I was in the body or out of the body, but my soul was calm and awfully solemn. I had a direct spiritual intuition of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. I felt that it was the Holy Ghost who prayed through me, and I was not more certain of my own being than of the blessing asked being given to the Son for me. *The entire matter was settled apart from me in the Godhead.* I was only brought for the moment into the counsels of the Godhead as concerned my own service. It is not in my power to describe the nature of that communion with God. *No human language has any word to explain it.*

I have already said that the Lord bestowed much blessing on my soul through the instrumentality of Miss H. I was brought into a blessedness of communion with God which I had not enjoyed since my conversion, and was conscious of being unusually helped by the Spirit of God in expounding the Word. But that first and really wonderful blessing did not abide. There was evil in my heart of which I was unconscious, which under temptation rose into activity and grieved the Holy Ghost, so that the help which I had received in teaching was withdrawn and the peculiar and blessed brightness which God had shed on my soul ceased,

“Certain truths to which Miss H. was used to direct my attention led me to see that *it was not enough to be sure that I had Christ*. I enquired what I had received Christ for. To say that Christ is my sanctification, if I do not receive Him for my daily sanctification and walk as He walked, or to say that I am seated in heavenly places in Christ, if I am still earthly, and am not *in real experience* entering within the veil, is self-delusion. *Only the places on which the Israelites set the soles of their feet became theirs*. God gives Christ to the world, but all the world does not receive Him. So God gives many blessings in Christ to believers, but all believers do not receive and enjoy them. *That only is mine which I have faith to receive in reality and power*. I therefore began to ask, with deep concern before God, how far I had received Christ, and He was dwelling in my heart. I was led by this to take a much higher standard of spiritual life, and to expect a much more complete riddance from evil, and a fuller conformity to Christ than I had before looked for. Again and again God brought me into clearer light, yet I lost it as I had done before. But He still kept me crying to Him against the evil which had caused the darkness. Sometimes I have been held for hours in continual prayer, and sometimes this has lasted for many days together. When thus helped to abide in prayer I have always been restored. I knew that the blessing I had got before was real, and from God; I knew that God was able and willing to restore it if I was made ready to receive it; I was certain that no one else in the universe could; I was made exceedingly to desire its restoration: what then could I do but search and humble myself before God, and cry to Him for help? This went on for most of two months, and I do not know that it is entirely over yet. I would rather that it would go on for years than that evil should be left undetected and unremoved, to weaken my soul and hinder my communion and service.”

Thus did our dear brother press on—getting ever deeper into the life of the Lamb—stretching out eager hands of faith and love after the glorious prize, never claiming to

have attained, but making the attainments of yesterday the starting point of to-day, until at last the patient race was run.

In the year 1879 his final removal from Ballymena to London took place. It was an important step. His diary contains the following reflections :—

"Oct.—I have been waiting constantly on God about a matter of much importance, and have come to the conclusion that it is His will for me to remove my residence from this town to London. On Thursday, the 30th, my furniture is to be sold, and early in the following week I go over to London to seek a house. I cannot write down all the considerations by which I have come to this decision. Those which have most weight on my mind are : (1) The wide door opened for me in London and elsewhere in England ; (2) The help God has given me in preaching and teaching there ; (3) The heartiness of the reception given me there by saints, and the unanimity of their wish to have me labour among them ; (4) The narrowness of the door opened in Ballymena, the comparative want of help and liberty, my being so frequently laid aside here, and the little apparent fruit from my work for a good while both among saved and unsaved ; (5) In my frequent absences from home my wife will be happier nearer friends and relatives than she is now ; (6) The arrangements for the Gospel preaching at Upper Clapton, where I expect to live, will make it easy for me to pay the brethren here frequent visits.

"I am very glad that no pecuniary inducements have come in either to sway my judgment or to expose me to reproach, for I have never been in any way promised money, and I am certain, at all events, that money has been no part of my object in removing. God has abundantly supplied my wants here ; I have wanted for nothing ; I wish no better house than I have lived in and no better style of living.

"Dec. 5th.—I have now been a month in London ; I came here on Thursday, November 6th, and was much helped in my journeying.

" 31st.—I close the year (now 11.45) in Thy presence, O God ! It has been more full of mercy, I think, than any year that has gone before it ; even in temporal things how wonderfully I have been provided for ! . . . But this is far from the chief blessing God has given me this year. There never has been a year in which I have so little sunk into mental and spiritual trouble, and during the whole of which I have enjoyed so much unbroken communion with Thee, O God ! "

On Feb. 1st, 1880, Clapton Hall was opened for the preaching of the Gospel, the Iron Room proving too small. The following extract refers to this :—

" *March 25th.*—Nothing but faithfulness and mercy. To-day I start for Liverpool, for meetings to-morrow (Good Friday), and for Belfast, for meetings on (Easter) Monday and Tuesday. I baptized twenty in Clapton Hall last night. Mr. Denham Smith was to preach the first Sunday in that hall. He was taken ill, and it was I who preached (1st Sunday in February). Now I have conducted the first baptism, and I was also used in the first conversion that took place in it. My heart is being more knit to the work and the people here, and I think I am being fitted for the work and helped in it. I believe I am where God would have me be."

Of special interest are the following extracts from his diary nearly 20 years after his settling in London, written but a few days before his departure, shewing that with increasing age his heart kept fresh in the enjoyment of God, and young in His service. The letters which follow this memoir will tell us something of his exercises and of the growth of the divine life in him during the interval :—

" *Friday, Dec. 22nd, 1899.*—Not feeling well, and the weather being very dreary, I kept at home all day. In the evening gave an address in Clapton Hall, on 2 Peter i. 1-12, to one of the smallest audiences I remember there. Helped of God.

"23rd.—Paid some visits. Wrote some letters. Helped in preparing Christmas parcels, etc. Having a cold, and the night being foggy, did not go to the oversight meeting.

"24th.—At Clapton Hall in the morning. Spoke briefly from some verses in John xiv. In the evening spoke from Rom. x., using chapters v., vi. and vii. to explain and press God's salvation. Again helped of God.

"25th.—Christmas day. Gave an address in Clapton Hall on Christ our '*Righteousness*,' Christ our '*Life*,' Christ our '*Example*,' Christ our '*Lord*,' Christ our '*Portion*,' Christ our '*Hope*,' Christ our '*All*.' Unusually helped. The largest Christmas meeting in Clapton Hall I remember.

"26th.—The damp weather and my cold kept me at home all day. Many letters, and some visitors.

"27th.—This forenoon visited [giving many names]. In the afternoon visited [another list of names].

"28th.—Not well to-day. Kept in the house most of the day. Wrote many letters.

"29th.—Very poorly to-day, but though weak, conducted a short service in Mrs. Bacon's drawing room after her husband's funeral, and in the evening gave an address to a small audience in Clapton Hall on the Lord's Coming.

"30th.—The unfavourable day kept me at home.

"*Sunday, 31st.*—Spoke a few words in Clapton Hall in the morning on '*A faithful God*'; in the evening preached to a good congregation on '*Heretofore*,' '*Hitherto*,' '*Henceforth*,' and '*Hereafter*.'

This proved to be his last public ministry on earth.

"*Jan. 1st, 1900.*—Breakfasted in bed because of chest cold, and foggy, chilly weather. Judged it safe to stay in the house all day. Spent some time in prayer to God in Christ's name—a wonderful thing to be able to do. Being detained by weather, etc., from the prayer-meeting in the evening, I went over the names of all in fellowship at Clapton Hall, interceding for them as I was helped. . . . Put up the word '*Redeemed*,' carved in oak, on our wall in the evening.

"2nd.—Breakfasted in bed as yesterday. After a little prayer and Scripture, visited [giving a long list of names]; in the afternoon [another list].

"3rd.—After a rather sleepless night again breakfasted in bed. Rose to see ———, and had much close soul-talk with him. Hindered from much visiting by rain. Saw and prayed with ———, who is ill, and also saw ———, who has been ill four or five weeks. Went to a Bible reading.

"4th.—Breakfasted in bed. After Scripture and some prayer, visited. The afternoon was too wet for going about; had some happy prayer. In the evening met with six young men who intend joining my Sunday afternoon Bible class."

His last entry was a very brief one:—

"5th.—Breakfasted in bed. Forenoon visited [a lengthy list of names]; afternoon [another list]. Ill with influenza."

Dear Mrs. M'Vicker kindly adds the following:—

"He came home at 5 o'clock, very tired; after tea he seemed a good deal revived and spoke of going to the evening meeting, but was persuaded to remain and rest. He then retired to his own room for communion with God, and that communion was never again to be interrupted, for before 8 o'clock he was in the unveiled presence of the Master he had loved so well and served so faithfully. 'His servants shall serve Him, and *they shall see His face.*' "

THE REVIVAL OF 1859.

AS Mr. M'Vicker was so much blessed at the time of the Revival of 1859, and took so deep an interest in that work of God's grace, it is thought well to give his own account of its origin, as spoken at a Conference on Revivals in a large tent at Tottenham, in 1898.

"Let me say a few words about the revival in Ireland in the year 1859, during the progress of which I myself found peace with God.

"For the encouragement of sisters in their work for the Lord let me say at the outset that the first seed out of which that work grew was sown by the hand of a woman. Mrs. Colville, of Gateshead, laboured in and around Ballymena, co. Antrim, about the year 1857, for six months, visiting cottages and talking with the people about personal knowledge of salvation.

"She told me herself how trying those months were; few sympathised with her, and she saw little fruit from her work. But God gave her at least one soul for Christ, who might well have been called *Gad*—'A troop cometh.'

"A young man named James M'Quilkin, an unconverted church member, heard of her visiting among the people. He was a strong Calvinist, and he dreaded lest Mrs. C. should be spreading what he regarded as false doctrine among the people. At a tea-table where they met he asked, 'Are you a Calvinist, Mrs. C.?' 'I would not wish,' she answered, 'to be more or less of a Calvinist than our Lord and His apostles. But I do not care to talk on mere points of doctrine. I would rather speak of the experience of salvation in the soul.' She added: 'If one were to tell me what he knows of the state of

his heart with God I think I could tell him whether he knows the Lord Jesus savingly.' This at once closed James's mouth. He felt that his heart was not right, and he dreaded exposing its true state if he spoke further.

"As God so ordered it, a lady present began to unbosom herself to Mrs. C. ; and had the Holy Spirit been revealing the state of James's heart, he himself told me that it could not have been more exactly described than in the words this lady used. 'I waited,' he said, 'with breathless expectation to hear what Mrs. C. would answer. After a brief pause she said solemnly, My dear, you have never known the Lord Jesus. I knew that she spoke what was true of *me*. I felt as if the ground were about to open beneath me and let me sink into hell. As soon as I could, I left the company. For two weeks I had no peace day or night. At the end of that time I found it by trusting the Lord Jesus.'

"Christ 'could not be hid.' As soon as this young man received Him as his Saviour he began to gather what were called 'prayer meetings,' and to speak of Him to others. This was in 1857.

"His first convert was one who still lives, whom I have known intimately for nearly forty years, Jeremiah Meneely. He had been for some time anxious about his soul ; had begun family worship and attendance at a weekly prayer meeting, and had even become a communicant at the Lord's Supper. But he had no power over sin ; he had no peace. When he heard his friend M^r.Q. speak of the knowledge of pardon he felt in his heart that James had got possession of something that he himself still lacked, and he determined that he would never rest till he obtained it.

"For a time his efforts were vain. But one day, in his room alone, he came on that verse in John vi. : 'Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out.' Kneeling down with his finger on the verse, and his eyes up to the Lord, he said, 'Lord, I have come to family worship, and the prayer meeting, and the sacrament, and I am unsaved yet. Now I come past them all : I come to Thyself, and here is Thy word binding Thee

not to cast me out.' He saw that the Lord had left Himself no way of escape. And there and then the matter was settled by the Holy Spirit through faith in his heart, and settled for ever.

"These two began to pray together, and they found two other young men, already believers, though feeble ones, who wished to join them in prayer.

"This is another point of great importance to be noticed in regard to that revival—the place that *prayer* had in originating and sustaining it. Night after night these four gathered for prayer; and as others were converted the numbers at the prayer-meetings grew. What some of them had heard of Mr. George Müller's experience of God's answering prayer, greatly encouraged them. Their great petition was, 'Lord, pour out Thy Holy Spirit on this district and country.' When told by some brethren that their prayer was a mistake, that the Holy Spirit *had been* poured out, they comforted themselves with the thought that God knew what they meant, and He did, and granted it; for the work spread more and more—at first quietly, then in a way that drew universal attention—till the fire spread over the whole of Ulster and far beyond it.

"I would like to call attention to another of the secret causes of the blessing granted in that work—the *faith in God* that marked the workers. I never met anyone who seemed to have it so deeply settled on his heart as a principle, that the way to honour God and to please Him was to expect great things from Him, as James M'Quilkin. He delighted to speak of the great things God was about to do, and spoke of them as if he saw them done.

"I think I ought also to say that the previous religious teaching which the people had received much helped the progress and stability of the work. The great mass of them were entirely devoid of spiritual life; but they had been trained to value the Scriptures and taught a sound theology. The wood was laid ready to burn and the breath of God kindled it.

"I might add in conclusion, that those whom God uses in His work must be content to let Him have all the glory. When

the Evangelical Alliance met in Belfast in the year 1859, and nothing was being spoken of but the wonderful revival then going on, I sat beside the sister with whose quiet labours it all originated, and her name was not once even referred to. She got no honour. And she was content to have it so. She did not 'receive honour from men' but 'sought the honour that cometh from God only.' "

SELECTED LETTERS.

New found joy in Christ.

Cullybackey,

June 30th, 1859.

DEAREST WIFE,

Everything here is right. The flowers are in full beauty and sweetest fragrance. The house is to be stone-finished this summer. And, best of all, my mind is at peace! Dearest Mary, I almost wish I had brought you home with me. I had such a time of earnest, tearful communion with Christ this morning, and I thought, "Oh, now if Mary had been here she might have had it too!"

Last night I had what a little while ago I would have called a bad night. I had no sleep till three or four o'clock this morning, but I can't describe what a peaceful, joyful night it was. Pray for me, my dear wife, that I may be held fast. I prayed for you and think I shall be heard, *and that you will get your feet on the Rock. Seek on and pray on.*

Ever your devoted husband,

J. G. M'VICKER.

* In most of these letters strictly personal references are omitted. Many were written by Mr. M'Vicker to his wife, when he was away from home (in which she is addressed as M.), and perhaps none more fully show the simplicity and integrity which were such marked features of his character.

The joy of salvation.*Cullybackey, 1/7/59.*

DEAREST WIFE,

I have just poured out my first cup of tea at my solitary breakfast, and cannot resist the desire to write you, if only a line, to tell you how much peace and joy I continue to feel, and to beseech you to look on and pray on, to get the same peace and joy, if you have not yet received them. I do so wish you were here that we might talk and pray and rejoice together. I am doubtful if I ever believed before. I certainly never had anything like the same feelings. *I have salvation.* I see my acceptance with God as clearly as I see this paper. The way of salvation is now as plain to me as the alphabet. I never understood it properly before. Dearest Mary, you have seen it or will soon see it too. I have prayed, oh, so earnestly, for you, and I believe I shall be answered. Our evening prayers have been blessed; my heart fills and my eye overflows when I think of them. I accuse myself for not bringing you home with me. I might have helped you, and it certainly would have comforted and strengthened me. God bless you, my darling wife, and fill your heart with love for Christ.

I have just been writing a letter to Dr. Montgomery [a Unitarian minister] of Dunmery, about "Justification by faith." God knows if it will do any good; I leave it in His hands. I returned home last night and attended the meeting at James Hewitt's; a very solemn and delightful meeting it was; the happiest I ever attended.

Give my love to father and mother and all at home.

Your devoted husband.

The faith that gives assurance.

Near Groomsport, 14/7/59.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

What has brought us hither? Thereby hangs the most memorable story that we have to record of our whole past lives. You have heard of the great *revival* now passing over the north of Ireland. I took a leading part in helping it forward about Cullybacky, holding meetings, visiting persons in trouble about their sins, etc. Little did I imagine the enormous change that was awaiting myself; but it pleased God on Sabbath fortnight, while at the communion table, to reveal His Son in my heart in a very wonderful manner. For some days I did not know what I had received. I soon, however, became aware that I had been saved; that the Lord Jesus Christ, with all the fulness of salvation in Him reaching on to heaven, was given me of God; that, in a word, I was made as sure of heaven through Christ Jesus as if I had been there already. No one can tell the happiness, the peace and the joy I experienced for some days. It was likely to be too much for my body; but God gave me no more than I was able to bear. Since that time [here follows a long list of names of intimate relatives of the writer] have through my instrumentality been brought to rejoice in the same sure hope of everlasting life. In order to enjoy quietness and to strengthen our bodies M. and I have come here for a couple of weeks. I wish all our friends were round about us; we certainly never expected to enjoy so much happiness short of heaven.

You will naturally enough enquire how we have attained to this great and blessed privilege. Dear mother, it is nothing less or more than the simple faith of the Gospel, which has been lost from the world for hundreds

of years. In early Christian times every believer was sure of heaven ; in these latter days nobody is sure. Which is wrong ? In one case there must be *faith*, in the other there certainly cannot be. I am firmly persuaded that there is no true faith that does not give assurance of heaven.

How can that assurance be attained ? By believing. But what is believing ? It is receiving Christ Jesus as offered to us in the Gospel. How is Christ offered to us in the Gospel ? Herein is the great truth that has saved my soul.

The way in which Christ is commonly received is this—Men take Him for the pardon for their sins, then go and do the best they can to keep His commandments, turning their doings into what they call “evidences,” and rest their hopes of heaven, not on the merit, indeed, but on the fact of these evidences ; they make a Christ of them.

Here is the real Gospel—In the fulness of Christ there is stored up for us the pardon of our sins and our acceptance with God ; but there is more. There is not left between this and heaven a great gulf that we must fill up with our good works the best way we can, and over which no faith can confidently pass. Our good works also are stored up for us in Christ Jesus. Our salvation includes this—acceptance with God, every good work of our lives, and glory in heaven. Our Lord Jesus Christ said, “It is finished,” and now our “*life* is hid with Christ in God.”

If Christ is *thus* received, then we must take our daily works from Christ as well as our pardon ; then we must give up our own plans, our money, our everything, and just leave the Lord to plan for us and do with us as He chooses. Broken down before God because of our sins, hardness of heart and unbelief, we must look on and

on till we get that look of faith that tells us with irresistible conviction that Christ is in us, the hope of glory.

Think this matter over, dear mother. It is infinitely important. Christ *thus* received has given me assurance. Has your faith ever done so yet? Please speak about it to the rest. Many an earnest prayer for you all ascends to the throne of grace.

Ever affectionately your son,

Scriptural baptism and church order.

Ballymena, 8/12/59.

MY DEAR E.,

You had been told of our change of views in regard to baptism, church order, etc., but could not understand it. My letter in *The Ballymena Observer* will probably explain it to some extent. Another in the same paper this week, which I will also send, will make it clearer.

After it pleased God to give us entire peace in resting on the finished and accepted work of the Son of God, I felt completely loosed from allegiance to every being except *God*, and from every document but *His Word*. Confessions, catechisms, covenants, testimonies, etc., were as wholly stripped off me as the old skin from a serpent in sloughing time. At the meeting of the Synod I renounced all these human documents entirely, asking them for time to reconsider them, and when I had done so, I felt I could never submit to them again. As a freeman of Christ I could not be bound by ordinances of men. Human writings have no authority over a Christian conscience; why then should they keep asunder the members of Christ's church, who are one in Christ, animated by His living, indwelling Spirit?

That was my first step out of sectarianism; it was a

mighty one, and it brought all the rest after it. My mind from the very first was exercised with the question, What is the Church of Christ? Is this a Church of Christ over which men have put you to preside? I felt that it was not. The great bulk of the members there had no real faith in the Lord Jesus; they had a certain amount of knowledge, went through a certain round of duties, and that was the whole of it. Sure faith in Christ, giving them peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, they did not possess, did not even profess to have, had never been asked if they had. The whole thing was a human system—members without faith, elders without faith, a minister without faith. How could I dispense the Lord's Supper to such a gathering? What was I to do? I was in no little perplexity. Yet I felt too that here, as in everything else, my sufficiency was in God; in Him was wisdom to guide me, and I sought it in faith.

The whole business of church-making and minister-making as it goes on around us, I saw to be a terrible sham. A baby is born, and after a few weeks is made, or owned—it does not matter which—as a Christian. That little Christian grows up to be a man or woman. Parents, elders, ministers, etc., tell him it is time he was “going forward,” but generally without one spark of real faith. He goes forward and eats the Lord's Supper. Just such a lad is taken early, sent to school, then to college, then examined, then licensed to preach, then hands are put on his head, and he is made a minister. At no step of his progress is he ever asked if he has faith in the Lord Jesus, and in the great majority of cases he has none. Is this the Church of Jesus Christ? and are these His ministers?

Such thoughts led me to consider the nature of church-membership, whether any unbeliever has a right to any of the ordinances of Christ, and among the rest, to baptism.

I opened the Scriptures with a simple, honest desire to be taught the truth on this subject by the Lord. I could nowhere find infant baptism; it was always *believer's* baptism I met with. The passages are innumerable. So I was forced to give up infant baptism as a part of popery not cleansed out at the Reformation, and for which no authority is found in Scripture. I was accordingly baptized by immersion, and the next week the Presbytery cut me off from membership and separated me from the congregation.

God has opened up a place for me; He brings out a goodly number to hear, and we (believers) break bread every Lord's-day. There is open ministry, that is, any one among us whom the Lord endows with gifts may use them for the church's edification. As far as we can see, our principles are just what prevailed among the primitive Christians.

You must not mistake us for a sect in America called Campbellites. They are in many mere outward arrangements right and scriptural, but in regard to the nature of faith and baptism fundamentally and dangerously wrong. *Faith* they hold to be in no other way from God than is the testimony ~~on~~ which we believe; and they consider immersion essential to salvation.

I have written so much that you may have a clear view of *our* ground, and not in the least to shake you off your own.

Yours ever affectionately,

Our need is our only title.

Ballymena, 23/10/62.

MY DEAR E.,

We were very glad to hear that H. had not returned to the business of shedding the blood of human beings,

and we have been praying that it may please God so to order it that he may get his discharge. If it were my case, I would rather suffer any severity the law might inflict, even to death, than engage in such a work.

I cannot be sure that every sentiment in Bonar's book accords with my thoughts, but in the *main* I am sure they are the same. I admire the exceeding clearness and simplicity of his way of putting the Gospel, and therefore sent it to you. May it help you in your great difficulty of seeing your right simply as a sinner to rest on the finished work of Jesus for present peace with God. Jesus Christ came into the world to save—not believers—not penitents—not *anxious* sinners—or *praying* sinners—but simply *sinners*. All that I have to know in order to accept Jesus as my perfect salvation *now*, is that *I am a sinner*. I have not to get myself brought out of the common class of *sinners* into a little corner in which there is a *superior* class of sinners—such as believing, praying, penitent sinners or anything of that sort—before I rest on Jesus for present pardon and peace.

If I may put it in another way: After long trying, I am perfectly certain that I cannot *in any way* save myself; that no man can; that God *alone* can. It is He who must take away my guilt; it is He who must put a new nature within me. I want a solid, rational ground for expecting Him to do this, which is certainly of all things in the universe the most unlikely. What could be more unlikely than that the very Being whom I have hated and rebelled against and offended in every way, should Himself undertake the work of saving me? Yet when I believe the story of the Cross to be true, all the unlikelihood disappears. The Son of God becoming Man and dying on the Cross and rising again, is my warrant for expecting God to save me. Knowing nothing but

that I am a sinner, I put myself before God, and, looking up to the Cross on which His Son died for sinners, I can say: "O God, what I see of Thee in that cross gives *even me, even me* a sure ground for expecting Thee to save me."

I am glad to think from your last letter that you have more light and clearness than you had before. Seek more *quietness*; Isaiah xxx. 15; xxxii. 17. Remember that you have only to be perfectly satisfied with Christ. God is thus satisfied with Him, and when you are also, then you and God meet in Christ and are reconciled. "*He is our peace.*"

You will not blame me for being too much of a sermonizer; these truths make me exceedingly happy, and I long to have all as happy as I am, or far more so. The knowledge of Jesus has been a new life to me, and has given existence an infinite value beyond what it had.

Ever yours lovingly,

Communion with the Lord preserves from weariness.

Mallow, Wednesday.

DEAREST M——,

By the kind care of our Father in heaven I arrived here safely. The last few stages I was quite alone in the carriage, and had much happy communion with the Lord, which helped as much as anything to keep me from being weary. I expect to preach at 12.30 p.m. May the Lord stand by me and strengthen me, so that He may be glorified, sinners saved, His saints strengthened, and I, if it be His will, unthought of and forgotten. Oh to be emptied of ourselves and filled with Jesus!

Ever yours affectionately,

The blessedness of dependence upon God.*Ballymena, 23/3/63.*

DEAR BROTHER IN THE LORD,

I cannot tell you God's goodness in remembering me, and how sweet I find it to depend on Him. It is now a year since I was led to cast myself again entirely on Him for support in my service; and not merely have all my wants been supplied, but, through dependence on Him, I have received blessing and enjoyment that no words can describe. Now, through peculiar circumstances, I need His care more than I did before; but He does not fail or forsake.

The Lord has given us much reason for thanksgiving in connection with our meetings since we were gathered in Scriptural simplicity. We now number not far from a hundred in communion, in every one of whom I have confidence as a child of God. The Lord is increasing and deepening His life in many of the brethren. There have been a few conversions lately also, but our greatest trial is the infrequency of these.

Since leaving the chapel my opportunities for preaching the Gospel have been fewer. Not many come to the Lord's-day evening meeting in our room, and I am seldom invited to meetings around. This arises from the evil reports industriously circulated concerning the "Plymouth Brethren," whom I was said to have joined. But I am persuaded it is all of the Lord, who saw more of the emptiness of my past preachings than I did, and who desired to give me more time for reading the Word and prayer. He can open the door wider than ever when He pleases. He gives me many opportunities of speaking to individuals, and much freedom in so doing.

Yours in the Lord Jesus,

Real ministry the flowing of a divine spring within us.

Near Middleton, Co. Cork,

25/6/64.

DEAREST M——,

You have no conception of the unbroken round of occupations laid out for me while I am here. On Wednesday I had two meetings some forty miles distant, I think, from each other. I returned to Cork on Thursday morning, went direct to the Baptist chapel and addressed a meeting there, chiefly of believers. Between that and the evening meeting, I had to dine and take tea with a number of dear brethren in our Lord, invited on my account, and then to get time for communion with the Lord Himself.

I judged it to be best not to bring any line, or make any preparation, but to trust the Lord, as I went on, to give me matter fresh from Himself, and this makes it necessary that my communion with Him should be kept unbroken. Of course there is a much higher reason for keeping communion with Him inviolate, but this is one reason. Then I spoke to a very large meeting in the Protestant Hall at 8 o'clock in the evening. I could hardly tell you in the course of a short letter how much I was hindered yesterday, through various mistakes. Yet, though I missed both dinner and tea, I was able to reach both meetings at the appointed time; and in the evening, when one would have thought my strength exhausted from want of my regular meals, I was unusually helped to set forth Jesus with much sweetness in my own soul.

Yours lovingly,

How to get nearer to God.

Newry, 16/8/64.

DEAREST M——,

I hope you will be able to give a good deal of time to communion with the Lord. How often you have lamented to me your want of happy nearness to Himself. Now you know that *all* our wants must be supplied by Him, and to get the supply we must come and ask. But we have no desire naturally to come to God. Our heart draws us away. How then *can* we come and ask to be drawn near? I am sorrowfully familiar with the difficulty from my own experience. But there is help after all. Jesus is in heaven. He pleads for us; He gives us a little bit of desire; He helps us in using that to pray for more, then we use that increase to get on still farther. Let us always remember that God is *for* us; we have not to overcome His will; His will is our salvation; He desires us to be always at His side. We may be sure that when we are asking for that, we are praying according to His will. Remember *me* at the throne. I *greatly, greatly* need help.

Ever, etc.,

The work of an Evangelist.

Newry, 18/8/64.

DEAREST M——,

I enjoy my work very well, though not so much as I did at Cork. There I was more constantly engaged in it; here preaching is only once a day. Time indeed does not drag with me, for one has business with God at all hours, and time spent with Him is always happily spent. But I do not feel as if I was really doing the work of *an evangelist* while reading, praying, walking, etc. The

early preachers of Christ did not merely go to meetings announced and prepared for them. They woke up the towns which they visited with the message which they brought. I suppose they addressed the people in the streets and market places and on the roads, somewhat as Mr. Baxter did in Ballymena. Oh, for the mighty working of the Holy Ghost ! for without Him we can do nothing.

Ever affectionately,

Quietness before God (Ps. xxxviii, 7, marg.).

Newry, 6/10/64.

DEAREST M——,

To-night I expect to preach in Banbridge. Oh for fruit from so much preaching ! I seem like a broken vessel thrown into a corner and of no use. I wish I had grace even to lie there in quietness till the Master saw well to take me up. But my impatience and desire to be something hinders God's work in me sorely. May the Lord have pity and grant me to be humble, quiet and faithful.

Ever affectionately,

God's love wise and tender.

Banbridge, undated.

DEAREST M——,

Doubtless this time of trial has been ordered by One who has considered your best interests. It is well for us that His love for us is as wise as it is tender, and that He does not shrink from subjecting us to any trials that He knows we need. Let us calmly reflect on the foundation on which we are resting, and the reality of the providential government of God and of His faithful love.

Let us also remember the many instances we have had of His care for us. Has He not far exceeded our expectations? We reckoned on trials when we cast ourselves on Him; we need not therefore feel as if any unexpected thing had come on us. They have been far fewer than we thought, and from what have we derived more precious blessings than from them? If any one lesson is clearly taught in Scripture, it is that the path of faith is *to the flesh* a path of trial. But for what other would we be willing to exchange it? One thing is clear and certain: He who has undertaken for us will not fail us.

Ever yours affectionately,

The danger of feeding the self-life even in the service of God.

Near Cavan, Tuesday.

DEAREST M——,

The people to whose house I have come are of the "upper class." When I am among such I see the wisdom of God in casting my lot among the poor, for I am far from feeling as much at home, and often catch myself talking to please those I am with, and not the Lord. This is, perhaps, why I am here, that I may see another form of evil in this wretched heart of mine.

The meeting last night was *very* small. Being the evening of Cavan fair the townspeople were too busy to come, and the people from the country, not at the fair, did not care to come into town. I believe there were just twelve persons present. I felt in a poor state for speaking, and thought that the audience was much larger than I deserved. I think if I felt more the privilege God gives me in allowing me to speak of Jesus at all, I would enjoy it more largely. But indeed I oftener think I am doing

something for God when I am going to preach, than realize that He is doing something for me. We would rather serve than *be served*; rather confer obligations than submit to receive them.

Ever affectionately,

On putting "Ifs" between God's love and His help.

Ballymena, 22/3/65.

DEAR —,

You will have thought many hard thoughts about me, for which I forgive you, which is an easier way to begin than to ask your forgiveness. I *have* been busy, but had I been careful of time might have answered yours much sooner. One inclines so much to do the thing one *must* do, and leave undone that which *may* be deferred. Many a thought I have had about you. Please do not return like for like, but write me soon and tell me how you and A—— get on.

What has kept me so much occupied is a growing interest in the things of God in this neighbourhood, and the progress of a real work of conversion among souls. You can well understand how this needs more time for preaching, visiting, and even for prayer, though I give much less than I ought to them all. It pleased God in the beginning of last December to convert some souls in a very striking way, and ever since He has been continuing to save soul after soul; hardly a week passes that we do not hear of some. At first those that were brought in were nearly all men; latterly women, and even children, have been enabled to trust our Lord Jesus. I have baptized one little girl of 14 and another of 12 years of age, both, I am persuaded, true believers. May the Lord soon begin to

work among the children here. The last conversion I heard of was that of an old member of Cullybackey congregation. Her husband was converted in 1859, and was convinced that he ought to be baptized, and to be separate from unbelievers in church fellowship; but he has only lately been baptized and received into fellowship. See how God owns obedience. Almost immediately after, his wife was converted. I always regard the conversion of a Covenanter as a very special work of grace—just as the conversion of a Pharisee used to be—because it is so hard to get such brought into the only place in which salvation is possible—that of a poor, naked, polluted sinner. This woman was naturally obstinate, and dark to a degree, so that I confess I did not somehow expect her conversion at all; but it is just the very one we *don't* expect that God chooses. Pray for us that the Lord may not be hindered by our unbelief, or sin of any kind, from going on to work mightily.

Since I wrote the above my little school is over; for you know I teach these four children their lessons every day.* They are getting on pretty well, taking all things into account. This also is a drain on my time. Some time or other I hope the Lord will relieve me of it; but I do not like the idea of sending the children to teachers who do not know the Lord.

Have you been enabled to deal with our dear Master about every difficulty, and found Him a very present help in every time of need? Nothing is so treacherous and

* It seems right to mention that Mr. and Mrs. M'Vicker brought up, as their own, four orphans, children of relatives. One of these—a niece of Mr. M'Vicker, who was adopted when one year old—became the wife of Mr. Thos. Morris, whose life was laid down for the cause of Christ in Central Africa. Living a life of faith in God themselves, Mr. and Mrs. M'Vicker trusted in Him also to provide for these children.

changeable as our hearts. But nothing so unchangeable as "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." The more we know Him, especially as our Priest, the deeper our peace will be. I think there are few things we either understand or believe less than *grace*—free, unconditional, and unalterable grace. We are always putting "*ifs*" between us and God's love and help. If *you* are not, you are a very happy soul. Yet why should we? Why not be unbrokenly happy? God desires it, and His provision is enough to procure it.

As to your question about communion with the U. P. Church, I suppose you have settled it ere this without my counsel. Best ask counsel of God. I think if you have an honest desire to know and *to do His will*, you will not be long in uncertainty.

Ever yours affectionately,

God Himself the ground of our confidence.

Ballymena, 13/12/65.

DEAR —,

I have generally found that frankness and courage answer best with persons suffering from melancholy, and that, if they talk out their trouble, it is more than half gone.

I have been much occupied with preaching and other work for some time. The Lord is pleased to open a wide door for His gospel in this neighbourhood. The town itself still continues a good deal shut up, but God's time will come; I am waiting patiently on Him. Meantime He is saving souls. Last Lord's-day a young married woman found peace in our morning meeting; a middle-aged woman came up after the same meeting to tell me

she had been converted through a meeting I held the previous Thursday. This cheers one's heart. *Do pray for us.* The Lord is at hand. God is working very manifestly at this time in many parts of the world. We do not know how soon all may be over. A moment, the dart of an eye, and the great transformation will be accomplished.

Faith does not feed on anything in self. What we see in ourselves should neither give us hope nor cause us discouragement. I charge you to *look up*, for I know the great value of this by experience. If you do not feel even a desire to look up, still look up for the desire. Expect *in no degree* according to your *state*, or *deservings*, or *doings*, or *past receivings*, but solely according to what GOD is, has *promised*, and has *done*.

Ever affectionately,

Christ our Sanctifier and Hope.

Ballymena, 29/3/66.

DEAR SISTER,

Good looks, as one gets on in life, one esteems increasingly as of little value. What is far better is the expression of thought and character; the inner man is incorruptible (1 Pet. iii. 4); let that be your great thought, dear E. I agree with you that to multiply pictures is a needless expense; our best picture is a quiet and godly life lived among our friends and before God.

In your letter you ask our thoughts of Christ's coming. I acknowledge that it does not occupy my thoughts as much as it ought. My troublesome heart gives me so much work, that I have to be more occupied with Jesus as a present help against it, than with Him as coming to

gather His church and take us all home. I am, however, settled in my judgment regarding the testimony of Scripture to some things connected with it. It is clear to me that the notion of the gradual amendment of the world through the conversion of men by the preaching of the Gospel in this dispensation is contrary to the Word. There will be no millennium till the Lord comes, gathers His church, judges the nations, and sets up His kingdom. Antichrist is yet to be revealed. There have been, indeed, and still are, *many* antichrists. But *the* Antichrist, the man of sin and son of perdition, is yet hindered by some cause (see 2 Thess. ii. 6,7) from being manifested. His manifestation will be immediately followed by the appearing of the Lord, for he will be destroyed by the brightness of *His coming*. So far my mind is clear.

There are other points discussed among believers about which I have opinions, sometimes doubtful opinions too, rather than settled convictions. Some think that Matt. xxiv., Luke xxi., and Mark xiii. point out certain signs which are to precede His coming to take away His church, for which therefore we are to watch, and before the appearance of which His coming need not be looked for. Others think that in these chapters Christ was speaking, as the Messiah, to the faithful Jewish remnant of His day, the Church not being formed till the Holy Ghost came down on the day of Pentecost. The Lord, it is said, will come *to the air* and secretly catch away His saints, and we cannot tell how near that event may be. The Church being gone, some Jews will be led to believe in Jesus as the Messiah and will thus become God's witnesses at that time on earth. Then, after an interval of three and a half to seven years, Christ will come *down to the earth* with His church to destroy Antichrist (whose reign

will have extended over these intervening years), and judge the nations. It is believed that it is chiefly for this faithful Jewish remnant in this interval that the signs and warnings of these chapters are written. You must judge for yourself; I am more inclined to this view than to the one that puts signs and events between us and the Lord's appearing.

I trust, dear E., you are making practical sanctification your daily business. It is not enough to have a theory that Christ is our sanctification. We are to seek to lay hold on that for which He has laid hold on us (Phil. iii. 12). We are to yield ourselves up to God so as to have our hearts filled with His Holy Spirit and our wills surrendered to His will.

I have been reading lately the life of a remarkably holy woman, whose spirit and example have stirred up my heart with earnest longing to be conformed to the image of the Lord Jesus and filled with His Spirit. Surely He is able to subdue our wills and bring them into a sweet and real union with His. It was for this that He gave Himself for us, even that He might sanctify us to Himself as a peculiar people. Alas, we are generally unwilling to be holy, unwilling to be helped. Our unbelief makes us think it difficult or impossible, and we are ready to say with the Jews in Jer. vi., "*We are delivered to do all these abominations.*" Let us strive in believing prayer to help each other in answering more completely to the mind that was in Christ, and in yielding Him fruit for His sacrifice for us.

Your ever affectionate brother,

The advantage of a life of trust.*Ballymena, 29/8/66.*

DEAR ———,

We here are all in our usual health. My head still tries me, but I can go on with much of my work. My heart distresses me more; I find it very hard to keep it in subjection. Often cast down, I am yet kept from despair, nay, often can rejoice. My hope is not in my own state, but in the fulness of Jesus; and He loves me, and is mine, on the ground of *free grace*.

I see a little of God's working, but not much. Believers are rather sleepy, and few conversions are taking place. Oh for more confession, and more prayer—perhaps I should add, and more *thanksgiving*.

We are still provided for, sometimes from day to day, sometimes scantily, sometimes abundantly; but never forgotten. One advantage of my way of living is that, whatever others may have without the Lord, *I have nothing*, and so am the greater fool to depart from Him.

Yours ever affectionately in Christ,

God's perfect knowledge of our hearts our infinite comfort.*Ballymena, undated.*

DEAREST M——,

God has been *very* good to us in many ways. Health has been continued or restored. Amid trials of faith, not a few, our temporal wants have always been provided for, and, above all, our souls have been kept in or restored to communion with God in our Lord Jesus. I wish many things for you, but I wish the last of these blessings above all. Few can know by more painful experience how easily the soul gets away from God, and

how strangely and sadly former communion fades from the memory, so that it seems like a dream sometimes. This deceitful heart of ours, too, will hardly let us own that it is so, and will hardly let us own that it is our own sin that is the cause. How much watchfulness and prayer we need ! Sin comes in so unconsciously and deceitfully, that we scarcely detect it till it does us mischief, and even then we unwillingly acknowledge it, and willingly palliate it. God's deep and perfect knowledge of the heart is our infinite comfort. May you be one "in whose spirit there is no guile," who will be helped to keep an open heart with God. Remember the blessed provision, "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father." We are not worse than God knew at the first, nor worse than the blood of Christ can cleanse.

— told me you had been making dresses. Are you still doing so ? Honest work, if it is done for the Lord, is honourable work. You know the word, "*Owe no man anything.*" God helps those who trust Him to keep *all* His commandments.

I hope — has more peace in her heart than she had when she wrote to me last. Then she seemed waiting till God saw her faith, or her conversion, or something of that sort in herself. He says Himself, "When I see *the blood* I will pass over you." Can she *believe* that ? Can she believe that a just and holy God, without seeing *one thing in her but sin*, can, and *can now*, through the wonderful work of Christ, take away all her sins and make her a daughter of His for ever ?

Yours affectionately in our Lord Jesus,

The distinction between self and Christ.

Ballymena, 10/11/68.

MY DEAR M——,

The longer I live the more I see the vast importance of a believer clearly distinguishing between self and Christ, and remembering that by the cross he has got rid of and renounced self, and that now, Christ, and *He only*, is his righteousness and life. What are these bad states of soul that we are tempted often to gloom over but *bad states of our flesh*? Would we have the flesh good? He that has fled to the life-boat need not tremble or mourn over the leaks and rottennesses of the condemned old hulk he has abandoned.

Much of our sorrow is from pride. We are vexed that our flesh is not better and is not growing better. We forget that the old garment is not mended but thrown away, and a new one given instead. Has *it* any faults? Point to them if you can; then I shall indeed tremble and mourn. But, if you cannot, you are welcome to point out as many evils in the old dead and buried self as you please. They humble me; make me thankful for my deliverance; make me cling faster to Jesus; but I have got rid of the whole thing, blessed be God! Let the grave alone that it lies in. *Jesus lives*.

These are the sum of the thoughts that daily help me against a tendency of mind very much akin to yours. Perhaps you need them too. I am not giving you what I have not proved. May the Spirit of God make them profitable to you also.

Yours ever affectionately,

All things working for good.

Dungannon, 6/1/69.

DEAREST M——,

Do seek to get your heart to deal in much reality with God. His love is real ; His relation to us as a Father is real ; His government over all events happening to us is real ; His willingness to keep every promise He has made is real. Do not let your heart off if it is treating these things as unreal ; take it right up to God and accuse it, and ask help against it in the name of Jesus—help which none ever thus asked in vain.

I have often been thinking of that verse, "*In everything give thanks.*" What a happy state of soul would obedience to this commandment produce ! Yet if there is wisdom and love in every event, and this there is if there is a God, then how reasonable to give thanks in *everything*, for "all things are for your sakes" ; "all things are of God" ; "all things work together for good." It is better for us not to wish things different till it pleases God : and to wish only that we may not miss the good which our loving heavenly Father intends to bestow on us, through their being as they are.

Ever yours affectionately,

Embracing the cross as our portion here.

Lurgan, 15/5/69.

DEAREST M——,

Whether looking at new houses and fine grounds and conservatories, etc., is good for the soul of one who has *no* place or portion on earth, I am not sure. . . . I was glad to get alone awhile and turn my heart to the better inheritance which I have in God, and which is to be

revealed at the coming of Christ. I wish I could heartily embrace the cross as my only portion here, "with all its shame, with all its grace." The crown will follow it, and the house not made with hands, eternal, heavenly.

Lovingly yours,

The sweetness of the presence of God.

Lurgan, 17/5/69.

DEAREST M——,

The morning meeting for the breaking of bread was well attended and profitable. None read Scripture or spoke but myself: one other prayed and several gave out hymns. I trust all was of the guiding of God's Holy Spirit.

Perhaps one is in danger of making too much of meetings; they are far from being my happiest times. When I get really into the presence of God in solitude, there is a sweetness and uninterrupted freedom of communion that I hardly ever enjoy in a meeting. Still, there is a presence of the Lord in the midst of the two or three gathered unto His Name, not promised elsewhere; and there would, perhaps, be more knowledge and enjoyment of His presence if there were more subjection of heart and a truer waiting on Him in our spirit. I awoke about 3.30 this morning, and was regaled by a delightful concert just outside the bedroom windows. The leading musician was a blackbird, which I suspect has a nest in the shrubbery, and he was seconded, or rivalled, by a number of less loud, but equally sweet songsters, that filled the morning air with a perfect flood of music. My heart tried to turn in worship to the blessed God that had taught them to sing, and whom they seemed, as they could, to praise.

Ever lovingly,

The eye turning and the heart crying to God.*Lurgan, 20/5/69.*

DEAREST M——,

I am afraid I have been forgetting what I have learned about giving up my own will, taking God's, and doing it, without which the soul cannot be full of peace and joy. However, it is much to know that we have Jesus and are His, and it is much, too, to know the remedy for any cloudiness of heart from which one is suffering, for the eye knows where to turn, and the heart what to cry to God for. I do from my heart wish I could take a continual delight in the will and things of God, just as a miser is constantly delighting in the accumulating of gold, or a voluptuary in the pursuit of pleasure. There is power for this in the indwelling Spirit.

I can see Jesus as the risen Saviour; I can hear His words and know they are His; I can trust Him as *my* Saviour; then I have life, and the fire is kindled. It is God who has given the life; it is He who has kindled the fire, and He will suffer none to put it out.

Ever lovingly,

Our nature and His nature.*Dungannon, 7/1/69.*

DEAREST M——,

The meeting last night tried my head much. I was left a good deal to myself, and instead of waiting in quietness on my ministry from the Head, I tried to make up for want of special power by energy and declamation, to my own exhaustion, and little to the hearers' profit. You know how common and apparently incurable a fault this is; may I learn at last!

I hope you are enjoying much peace of heart and happy communion with God. Dwell much on the reality of God, of His love, of His giving His Son, of His care, of His hearing and answering prayer : this will draw your heart out to Him more than effort and struggle. Do not be discouraged by the reluctance of your heart to draw near to Him, or its proneness to be drawn away from Him again. That is, of course it is, your nature : His nature, on the other hand, is to forgive all this for Jesus' sake and give abundant grace. May you be able to believe this fully !

Ever affectionately,

The secret of a tender and happy heart.

Ballymena, 4/1/70.

MY DEAR —,

Don't forget what I spoke to you about as we were going to the train—the need of daily self-judgment and discipline of heart before God. What fine saints we would be if we had none but angels round about us, and had nothing and nobody to try us ! But Jesus gave Himself *for* us, and now gives Himself *to* us, that we might be able to maintain tender and loving tempers, words and ways, in this *evil* world, and in the very circumstances in which we are placed. Let us never therefore excuse ourselves for coming short of the perfect standard by any circumstances of any sort. We have the grace and strength of Jesus to make use of, and therefore have *no* excuse. He served, and loved, and sacrificed Himself, and got no return but hatred, contempt, and ill usage ; yet He was never soured, and never spake an unloving word. And *His* life is now *ours*. Do take yourself daily to task before

God and own frankly every failure. It is often humbling, painful work, but it is wholesome, and, if you really wish to please God, indispensable, and by and by it becomes pleasant and delightful. You will never have a sweet, happy heart without it.

Yours ever affectionately,

Seeking supplies from God a sweet exercise.

Upper Clapton, 7/5/70.

DEAREST M——,

I was much comforted yesterday by the 1st verse of Ps. xli.—“*God* is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.” When one thinks on the past, on the present, and on the future, how blessed to have a refuge in GOD!—who has blotted out the past, upholds us in the present, and undertakes for the future. I could not think with the least comfort of my being here, or of my work here, but that I know God as my strength; this reconciles me to my weakness, and, I think I can say to some extent, makes me take pleasure in it. I do not in the least envy these rich men in London their wealth. I can honestly say I would far rather have to go to the Lord for money, than have it by me in the bank. We get much more than money when we go to Him, for His sweet love which He gives is better than all money; is it not? And having Him we shall want *no good thing*. Hallelujah.

Affectionately,

The worst calamities.

Upper Clapton, 28/5/70.

DEAREST M——,

Truly it is of God's mercy that we are preserved daily and hourly. Accidents and escapes teach us this, and the avoiding of accidents *ought* to teach us still more. . . . And how much more serious calamities there are than burnt fingers or broken bones ; I mean the loss of fellowship with God, of inward peace, of the life of faith in Jesus. Let us be careful that while we guard against bodily injuries, and feel thankful for escapes from them, we guard with double watchfulness against disease, and what may be called accidents, of the soul. I am especially anxious about you while in Bangor, for the temptations of the seaside are many. Do not forget, as early as you can manage it every morning, the thoughtful reading of the Scriptures, asking every now and then—"What does God mean that to say to *me*?" I find it is a great help in prayer to reflect before beginning, "Now God is here, and there are some things I wish to thank Him for, and some to ask Him for"; and then to go on putting them before Him as simply and briefly as I can, strengthening myself as I go on with the thought "I wander, I am cold, my prayers are very poor, but I ask in the name of Jesus, and that is the same as if Jesus was asking."

Yours affectionately,

Knowing God better we could bear to know ourselves better.

Upper Clapton, 15/9/71.

DEAREST M——,

I think we ought, as those who are God's children, to have a very high standard of Christian experience and

walk before us, and to be very searching and honest in seeing where we fall short of that standard. But, on the other hand, we ought to guard very much against the natural legality of our hearts, which would turn the sin and failure we discern in ourselves into matter for condemnation and discouragement. This is to deny the grace of God and set aside the blood of Christ which cleanseth us from all sin. What is the blood for but to cleanse those who discern themselves to be vile? What is grace for but to forgive and bless and help those who discern themselves to be sinful and needy? If we knew God better, we could bear to know ourselves better, without losing our peace and joy.

Ever affectionately,

The patience of the Spirit.

Upper Clapton, 25/9/71.

DEAREST M——,

The right way I see is to persevere in reading the Word and in prayer, whether we are enjoying it at the time or not. It is sometimes very difficult to fix the attention; but it is good for us to learn our own weakness in this and in every other respect, for we are altogether feeble and helpless. This makes us, in self-distrust and self-abhorrence, cleave more heartily to the Lord.

I was yesterday afternoon speaking for an hour to a class of young women, on the presence of the Holy Spirit and the need of attending to His voice, and of taking heed not to grieve Him. Are we sufficiently alive to His dwelling in our hearts? Surely we ought to be more attentive in little things as well as in great things to His guidance. There is much said about Him in the Word; and this is peculiarly the dispensation of the Spirit—the time when,

Jesus our Lord having gone away, He has come to be our Comforter and Teacher. We ought not to let frequent heedlessness cast us down. Confession cancels the sin, and the same gentle voice is ready to teach us again. No one has better reason than I to speak of his own stubborn heedlessness, or of the surprising patience of God's Spirit.

Every time we deny self and yield our will to God's, we get strength. "He giveth power to *the faint*, and to them *that have no might*, He increaseth strength."

Ever lovingly,

Communion with God is the life of the soul.

Upper Clapton, 28/9/71.

DEAREST M——,

It is very dishonouring to God to distrust His Word, or talk of weakness when we have His strength to use. We must either be doing what He does not call us to, or doing it in our own strength, or wanting to have some strength of our own, when we fail or complain. As you say, I know this very well; but there are times when I don't *seem* to know it, and my heart gets no solid comfort from it. Nevertheless it is true, and truth stands and supports us, while moods and feelings come and go. Thank God, I am not in the dark now.

I trust you keep to your purpose about securing a good portion of time daily for intercourse with God, either listening to Him in the Word, or speaking to Him in prayer, as you may be led. This is the life of the soul. It is to this Jesus has introduced us. He has brought us to *God*. He has made us acquainted with Him as our Father. Jesus is Himself our righteousness, so that we

need never doubt our acceptance or our strength, nor need we fear inability to keep our communion up. In this, as in everything else, we shall learn our own weakness; but this is needful and not hurtful, and will cast us more on Him for help.

Yours ever lovingly,

Our enemies defeat themselves in defeating us, for thus they drive us to God.

Upper Clapton, 30/9/71.

MY DEAR M——,

In reference to your experience in prayer and meditation over Scripture, you will find it shared to a greater or less degree by all the children of God, and you will see the reason. Sarah was past age, yet she bore Isaac, and through him a countless offspring. Why? She clearly saw the deadness of her own body and she counted only on God: "She counted Him faithful that promised." If you had only put, what I believe you *could* truthfully have put, after all you said in your letter about your wandering attention and cold heart, "Still, after all, I can reckon *on God*," you would have done just what Sarah did. Baffled again and again by your own weakness and inattention, you know in your heart that God has not failed. Therefore always fall back on Him. Rejoice in your own infirmity—the very thing that pains and hinders you—for this is why God has chosen you, that your weakness and emptiness might be the opportunity for His grace and strength. That you feel your infirmity painfully, that it is too much for you, that it makes you cry out, O wretched woman that I am, is nothing against you. An infirmity not sharply felt is

practically none, and is never relieved. An enemy that never defeats us never turns us to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore be not downcast, but strengthen and encourage yourself much *in the Lord*.

Affectionately,

Using the present moment for God.

Upper Clapton, 6/10/71.

MY DEAR M——,

How rapidly time flies away, and how little seems done! It is now three weeks since I came here; how little I have been able to be used of God! I know I have been of some use; but, had I been self-emptying and believing, of how immeasurably more use I would have been. A verse I met with this morning, however, forbids much of this line of thought: "Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the goal for the prize." The past must be left with God; it cannot be altered now: the future is with Him and is before us. May we use each present moment wisely, giving our whole undivided self to the work of each moment, and using the grace and strength of Jesus Christ, thus finishing the work God gives us to do, and joyfully expecting the coming of the Master!

Ever affectionately,

The way to God always open.

Upper Clapton, 7/10/71

MY DEAR ——,

I trust you are supported in your purpose of devoting a set time daily to keep the communication between

your soul and God open and uninterrupted. Only don't let this mislead you. We must not think *we* have to keep it open. It is open through the death and intercession of Jesus; we have only to use it; but it is in using it that we get the comfort and enjoyment of it. Legality is our grossest bane; we cleave to our doubts, unfitness, unworthiness, supposed amendments, and I know not what, and not simply to *Jesus*. I am often a mass of mere legality.

Yours ever affectionately,

Humility finds in weakness a reason for leaning on His might.

Upper Clapton, 15/10/71.

DEAREST M——,

How grateful we ought to be that we are so far on our way to heaven, to be for ever with our most precious Saviour! Surely trust in Him for the future well becomes us! Our weakness, our sinfulness, our many needs, our past experiences, what we know of His character and grace—all help us to trust. And what hinders? Pride and self-righteousness I fear. Shall I not lean on Him because I am weak! not lean on Him because I am sinful and empty! What abominable pride! Humility would find these things reasons for the very opposite, reasons for leaning and cleaving with all the heart.

Ever lovingly,

The deepest communion is found in secret.

Ballymena, 17/2/73.

MY DEAR SISTER IN THE LORD,

I have found in my experience, extending now over a good many years, how thoroughly true that word is, "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth." The more I have had the heart to give or undertake for the Lord, the more have the means for doing this increased. And I am persuaded this does not arise from my peculiar position in service for the Lord—depending only on Himself for means. His words are *always* found true by the one who in His heart believes them and acts on them.

We have had a series of very precious meetings of believers in Dublin; many were gathered from all parts of this country, and many also from England and Scotland. Much valuable and stirring truth was spoken among us, and there was also a good deal of earnest prayer, though I felt less power in this in the meetings than I could have wished; the intercourse of saints, too, was very sweet and profitable. Still I am not sorry to be more alone with the Lord Himself. When a friend returns from abroad after being years away, and we meet him in the midst of a large circle of friends, it is very pleasant; but it is pleasanter to take him up to our own little room, and there at the fireside, by ourselves, to listen to all he has to tell us and pour out our hearts again to him. That is true *communion*. So our happiest fellowship with our Lord is not in meetings, however profitable. No doubt they are valuable, and our souls would suffer if deprived of them; but I am sure we enjoy Himself more sweetly when we are alone, and the world, and even saints, are shut out. "One thing have I desired of the

Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, *to behold the beauty of the Lord*, and to enquire in His temple." Here is quiet, solitary, heart-satisfying fellowship with Himself.

I am glad you are keeping the need of Antrim, and the desires of your heart for it, before the Lord. You know what He has promised to those who delight themselves in Him. It may not be in the way or at the time you expect, but in His own way and time He is sure to fulfil His faithful promises. I am sure you will not confine your prayers to your own immediate neighbourhood. God would have us begin there, and be most earnest on its behalf; but think also of Ballymena, where sin and formality terribly abound, also of the whole of this province, and then embrace the world in your heart as far as the Holy Spirit enables you. Do you find that God lays individual souls much on your heart? Do you see any being quickened into life? I know how your heart longs to see some very dear to you manifestly and decidedly on the Lord's side. Be not afraid; only believe. We were in exactly the same state they are in, and the same power that alone saved us is here to do the same for them; therefore we can pray and trust.

Give my love and thanks to your dear mother, to whom my heart was much knit during the few minutes I spent with her under your roof. May her heart pass its last earthly days in the calm sunshine of the Saviour's love!

Yours affectionately in our Lord Jesus,

A Saviour to suit all ages and to satisfy all wants.

Ballyholme, Bangor, 9/4/73.

MY DEAR SISTER IN OUR LORD,

Mr. J. G—— and I live next door to each other, and we often speak about you as one closely joined to us in the love of Jesus Christ. He said to me a few days ago that he would like me to send you one of the enclosed cards to let you know of the meetings in Belfast on Monday. We both greatly desire your prayers for them, and trust you will be enabled by the Spirit of God to help by your intercessions.

You will be glad to know that —— is making blessed progress in the way of holiness and service ; he is a very precious brother, and has been used here as a witness for God. Both through his own labours, and through those of brethren he has brought here, a good number of souls in this neighbourhood have been, as far as we can judge, truly turned to the Lord.

It is believed that some hundreds of souls have been converted to God in —— during the last few months. You would see dear —— in Antrim this week, the instrument through whom chiefly the Lord wrought, who would also probably tell you of a recent work through him in County Derry. How gracious God is in hearing our cries ! Men plan and labour, but in vain *till* God works ; men plan and hinder, but in vain *when* God works. He is sovereign and gracious and almighty, and, blessed be His Name, His sovereign and gracious omnipotence is put forth in answer to our believing cries.

I was rejoiced to hear of your dear mother being able to be down in Antrim with you, and to join with you in setting forth the death of our adorable Lord Jesus. What a precious Saviour ! who suits all ages, who satisfies all

wants, who loves us as well when we seem frail and useless and good for nothing as when we are full of life and activity. He will *never*—at no moment, in no circumstances, for no cause whatever—leave us nor forsake us.

Yours affectionately in Him,

Amalek's remembrance shall perish from under heaven.

Dublin, 6/6/73.

DEAREST M——,

What a curious history the inward life of our hearts would make if it were simply and truthfully photographed day by day. Perhaps it would be uninteresting except to the man himself; yet I don't know, for one man's true picture would be a true picture of a great many. In poor, dear Rebekah, when she felt the two children struggling within her, even before they were born, we find an illustration of the history of all of us. She wisely went to God to enquire what was the nature of a contest she could not understand, and that, no doubt, caused her pain as well as perplexity. In His answer to her it was said, "The elder shall *serve* the younger." This is a great comfort; the flesh is the elder in us, but it is not to get the victory. "Amalek [the bastard grandson of this Esau that struggled in her womb] was the first of the nations: but his latter end shall be that he shall perish for ever." We are warned indeed by the story of Saul to beware how we spare the wilfulness of the flesh. He spared Agag, the king of the Amalekites, and an Amalekite slew him. It is well for us often to ask, 'Am I at this moment doing what I believe to be God's will?' I find a wonderful obstinacy of opposition to God's will in my heart. When His voice says, 'Spend this hour

in prayer, pay that visit, write those letters, meditate on this subject or chapter,' another voice says, 'Take Alison's history of the campaign of 1813, and enjoy a good read along some shady country road'; and, alas! how ready I am to turn my back on God and His people, and His work and will, and do my wretched own. I suffer for it; but, unless kept, would do it again to-morrow. Thank God it is written that God has sworn to have war with Amalek from generation to generation, and that—and this will be his end—the remembrance of Amalek shall be blotted out from under heaven. I hate him most heartily, and will sing a loud *Te Deum* over his everlasting burial.

But here is a letter turned into something not unlike a sermon; yet it is *not* a sermon; it is rather a little outcry of poor Rebekah as she feels the pain of the inward strife, and maybe it will suggest some help and comfort to you when similarly exercised.

Ever lovingly,

Our Master uses the tools He has prepared.

Dublin, 10/6/73.

DEAREST M——,

Many of the Dublin ladies tell me they envy their sisters in the North the access they have to the poor, as contrasted with *their* position in the midst of Roman Catholics. But I suppose the saying of Robert Chapman is true, there and here and everywhere, "*If we are ready for the Lord's work, we shall always find the work ready for us.*" Inward readiness is the great thing, for our Master is too wise to throw away a tool that He has prepared for work without using it.

Ever yours lovingly,

The beauty of the Lord the greatest sight.

Upper Clapton, 6/8/73.

DEAREST M——,

But after all, what is London? God knows how little I care about it. There are far finer sights we can have and never leave our closets. You remember, "One thing have I desired of the Lord, *that will I seek after*, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, *to behold the beauty of the Lord.*" All London has no such sight as that; and you may have it any day, and all day long at home. Do not let us be content to hear and read about this; *have* we it? Do the contentment and refreshment of our hearts say that we are seeing His beauty and delighting ourselves in Him? *His temple is within us.* It is not the great minds, the hard thinkers, that see God. Those who give up mental effort and straining, and withdraw themselves into the quietness of their own spirits, with trusting hearts and obedient wills—they are the ones that see Him, and hear His voice, and know the peace and joy of His presence.

Ever yours,

More inwardness of life needed.

Upper Clapton, 9/8/73.

DEAREST M——,

I hope your heart is happy with God and that you enjoy the Bible and prayer. Seek more inwardness of life, to realize within your inmost heart more of the presence and love of God. I meditated a little on the 81st Psalm with a view to the evening meeting. A precious psalm you will find it if you ponder it for a few minutes;

there is much in it that is searching and even saddening, but much also that is very tender and hopeful.

Ever affectionately,

Christ for us and Christ in us.

Upper Clapton, 12/8/73.

DEAREST M——,

The more I seek to walk with God, the more important I see it to be, to be more *inward* in our life. Most of the fervour and fuss of so-called religion has its seat in the outer, natural life; it is attended with great effort, leads to weariness, and ends in disappointment. "Strengthened with might by His Spirit in the *inner* man, that Christ may dwell *in your hearts* by faith." Christ *for* us is very precious, but *only* as it produces a faith which forms Christ *in us*, and this is by the Holy Spirit. We need to be daily wakened up in our inner consciousness to perceive what empty, sinful creatures we are, and joyfully to apprehend Jesus Christ as our righteousness, and fulness, and inward life; that so He may live in us by faith, and we may die to our own natural will and life. Oh, if we could only attain this, what a free, natural, happy life in Christ we would be able to live!

Ever affectionately,

God is very near to fill our emptiness.

Upper Clapton, 14/8/73.

DEAREST M——,

God is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think. When we reflect that in a room

with us there is an Almighty Being who is our Father, who has given us exceeding great and precious promises, and who cannot possibly break one of them, it seems strange that we should ever dream of lacking anything, or fear that any moment must be dull and unprofitable. That is to act as if He were not there to supply our lack, and fill our emptiness, and perfect His strength in our weakness. Are we not often very great fools, and very slow of heart to believe?

Ever affectionately,

Life might be made constant sunshine.

Upper Clapton, 25/8/73.

DEAREST M——,

God is very, *very* good. How true is that word of Jesus Christ's, "Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me . . . and ye shall find rest to your souls, for My yoke is easy and My burden is light." I am more and more persuaded that life might be made—even amid outward trials and deprivations—constant sunshine, if we were only of a mind to do God's will instead of doing our own, and to trust in God with all our heart instead of leaning on our own understanding. How we ought to pray "Keep us, Lord!" Did you ever hear of the good man who had a wine-glass with its shank, but wanting its broad foot, always lying on his writing table, with this inscription engraved on it: "Hold thou me up and I shall be safe"? *It* could not stand unless held; neither could he; neither can you; neither can I; but we have God, praise His name, always near us, and willing to take the trouble of always holding us up.

Yesterday we had a very precious meeting for breaking

bread together around our Lord. Dr. Lazeron spoke about beholding "the Lamb of God," and having nothing between Him and our hearts. After "the Supper" I spoke about the Lamb slain on Calvary; the Lamb fed on now; and the Lamb the centre of the power and praise and glory of heaven; and then dwelt on three corresponding thoughts: Jesus covered with our sins and their curse on the cross; Jesus glorified by our fruit-bearing now; Jesus at His appearing, glorified in His saints, and admired in all them that believe.

Ever affectionately,

As we grow spiritually, Christ becomes more beautiful in our eyes.

Upper Clapton, 5/9/73.

DEAREST M——,

I could not tell you how much your letter relieved and delighted my heart. Truly God is good. He gets better and better as we go on. You know what I mean: *He* is the same, of course; as good at the beginning as at the end. I remember reading somewhere that Dante, describing in his great poem his rising, in company with his Beatrice, from one heaven to another till they reached the highest, perceived the progress made, not by any upward motion, but by the increasing beauty of his companion. We have a better companion than any Beatrice, for we have the Lord Himself. And perhaps this is the way we notice our advance in spiritual life, we see more beauty in Him—a safer and better way than trying to see the signs of growth in ourselves. Isn't it blessed that we *do* find Him increasingly bright and precious! "To whom coming, . . . if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious." What we have

tasted makes us come again, and then we taste more, and come oftener ; and so, I suppose, it will go on throughout eternity ; we shall *never* get to the end of the fulness of good and of joy that is in Him. Poor as we always are, tried as we often are, sometimes without a single shilling, are we not infinitely well off ? We covet no man's silver or gold ; the portion we have is inexpressibly better. We shall not want ; but that is not all, that is only *negative*. " *Thou art with me . . . Goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.*" "Happy people!"

Last night was a baptism, and the place was crowded. There must have been 1,000 or 1,200 persons present ; 23 were baptized. I spoke before the baptism, and what I feared took place ; I spoke too loud, and overstrained my voice and head, and so had little joy in the service. But I spoke God's message, and have had a good sleep and hope to be nothing the worse, but I trust something the humbler and the wiser.

Ever yours,

"The still lesson."

Clifton, 1/9/74.

MY DEAR —,

Let us seek to become better acquainted with God by more inward and diligent meditation over His Word and on Himself. I heard of a Quaker child who had to spend half an hour every day sitting quiet and doing nothing, calling it her *still lesson*. I wish we could enjoy such a half hour daily in God's presence. Our *still lesson* would be one of the most useful of all the lessons of the day.

Ever lovingly,

How to live Christ.*Harrogate, 23/9/74.*

MY DEAR —,

Before coming here, the time I spent in Herefordshire, Devon and Somerset, in many places and with many brethren, was everywhere pleasant. I could not tell you how cordially I was received and how sorrowfully sent away. Truly the Lord has been *very* good. I had many opportunities of lifting Him up, both for the drawing of sinners and for stirring up the saints. The gatherings of Christians in several places are not all one could desire; but individual saints whom I met, and with whom I had the closest fellowship, seem to me worthy to be put beside some of the finest specimens of apostolic Christians. Notably was this the case with Mr. Hake and Mr. Chapman in Barnstaple.

Let us seek to live Christ: not by efforts; not by getting Him to help us; but by stepping right out of ourselves into Him, and staying there; looking on the flesh as a thing behind us from which we are delivered, and using what we have in Him.

Your ever affectionate brother,

The Lord's company dispels loneliness.*Drummaul, 27/11/74.*

MY DEAREST M—,

He is the best of all company when our heart grasps and enjoys His presence. There is no part of the day in which I am less lonely than the part I spend with Him. He is a wise speaker and a good listener—two things very needful to make a person an interesting companion.

Seek His presence much, dearest M——. Perhaps He orders your being so much alone for the very purpose that you may be cast more on Himself for company, and yield yourself up to the Holy Spirit to be taught the preciousness of His society.

Ever yours affectionately,

Wants are troubles only when we stop short of God.

Castlefin, 11/12/74.

MY DEAREST M——,

I doubt not that He who does us good continually will teach you the blessed art of being least alone when nobody is with you, and having the best of all company when you have none at all. When we have Him, we need no more. It is good to have darkness and weakness, when we have such a Saviour to disperse the one and put strength into the other. It is a pleasure to Him to say, "You have something I can do for you," and it is a joy to Him to do it. Wants are troubles only when we stop at them, and keep short of Him. Let us go on to Him, and we have the joy not only of having the need supplied, but supplied by the One our hearts feel it sweetest to get kindness from, and whose truest and greatest pleasure is to serve us.

Ever yours,

God and His promises never give way.

Ballymena, 10/5/75.

MY DEAR ———,

Do not fear about the future. "In some way or other the Lord will provide." At present I am not able

to give wise or useful counsel. I own that instead of looking up and waiting patiently on God, I often distress myself with fears for my own future; but this is not faith, and is therefore neither wise nor right. Whatever gives way, God and His promises cannot. I can serve you best by asking our good and kind God to give you His counsel.

Ever yours affectionately,

The people who get God's best things.

Ballymena, 2/6/75.

MY DEAR M——,

Through God's great goodness I am much better than I was and able to preach again, though I am creeping rather than walking, much less flying. "The lame take the prey" is a good promise. "He giveth power to the faint" is another. The Bible is full from one end to another of good things for the one who says, "I have sinned; I have failed; I am nothing and a good deal worse." It is worth one's while to look with care for what God says to such people. We are generally too far up to get God's best things.

Yours affectionately,

Living by faith in everything.

Harrogate, 3/11/75.

MY DEAR ——,

Remember that verse in the psalms, "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it; except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." This will apply to your learning lessons, to your

teaching children, to your caring for them in their walks and their going to bed, to bearing with their tempers and trying ways, to meeting patiently all the rubs you must expect to meet in any situation in the world. You cannot do or meet any of these in your own strength. Think nothing too little to pray about, nothing too little to distrust yourself about and to trust the Lord for. Aim at living a life of faith.

Ever yours lovingly,

The danger of profession without reality.

Upper Clapton, 29/1/'76.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I received your letter, and have since heard of your welfare from several. I trust you continue in good health, and that your soul prospers. After all, soul prosperity is far the most precious and important. To be rich in faith is far better than to be rich in this world's wealth. *God must be better than a little corner of the world that He has made*; and a little corner of it is all that the most prosperous worldling can possess. But the believer possesses GOD; there is no attribute or perfection of His nature that he cannot call his own. These *are* riches.

But even here there is need of taking care that we do not deceive ourselves with the *name* of wealth, while we are practically poor. To *say* that God is mine is one thing; to have Him and use Him as mine is another. I fear there are too many that are content with the name, and miss the enjoyment of the reality. Some time ago unbelievers used to deny that anybody could know for certain that his sins were forgiven him, or that God was assuredly his own. Now things are changed. The

preaching of Spurgeon, Moody, and numberless other evangelists has made the knowledge of salvation a rather popular doctrine. People now will profess to know that their sins are put away, and yet live in them very much as before. How subtle are Satan's snares, and how he can change his front to meet every truth that God brings forward in testimony! How watchful we need to be in dealing with those who now profess to believe! How especially watchful we need to be over ourselves, that we profess nothing we do not enjoy; that we *are* what we *say* we are; and that our walk and experience are according to the standing God has given us in Christ!

Through mercy I have been kept all this month in very good health, and in much quiet gladness of heart; I have enjoyed my work for Him very much; I think I never spent a busier month, and seldom spent a happier. My service seems to have been especially helpful to saints. I know of no case of conversion through my preaching, though I am looking up to God for that fruit also.

Ever yours affectionately in our Lord,

True strength is in proportion to conscious weakness.

Ballymena, 18/2/76.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I was very glad to get word of your safe arrival at D——. "He daily loadeth us with benefits"; "His mercies are new every morning: great is His faithfulness." We cannot half express His praise. I am glad you enjoyed your stay in the North of Ireland, and if your soul received any blessing here I trust you may be enabled to keep it.

I am much inclined to think that many are hindered by the common notions that prevail about growth and

progress in spiritual life. Holiness is generally spoken of as if it were some good and pure state of soul into which we are to try to get, and, when we have got into it, to try and stay in it. The discovery of some weakness, or the working of some sinful inclination in us, is looked on as very discouraging, because it is thought to shew that we are not as holy as we supposed, or that we have somewhat departed from the good state of soul we seemed to have reached. All this I believe to be a delusion, and a complete denial of the life of *faith*. True strength is in exact proportion to our conscious weakness.

Spiritual growth is not the increase of some good in us which we are to take notice of and rejoice in. It is progress in knowing what is in God. Practical holiness is found in apprehending by faith what we are going on to find in God. A joy that depends on our thinking ourselves in a good state, or that is disturbed by finding out something in ourselves that is bad, is very little worth. If we found out something bad in God, or discovered that He had changed, it would be a serious matter indeed. But while He remains what He is, all we have to do is to keep near Him and exercise faith in what we go on to learn of His perfections and promises.

But this is growing too like a sermon, so I will turn to something else. Mr. — left us on Wednesday morning. His meetings were all good and full, the last being the largest and best. Over twenty profess to have been converted during his stay. He is wonderfully fitted for the work of an evangelist, only one cannot help fearing lest the apparent effects should be owing a good deal to his rousing stories rather than the Word of God. In that case are the effects likely to last? Still, they may act as a kind of plough to let the seed of the Word deep into

the heart. Do not cease to pray for the work and the children of God here.

Yours affectionately in our Lord Jesus,

Rejoicing in the sunshine.

Newblin House, 1/4/76.

DEAREST M——,

How kind and good our heavenly Father is! How strange that we should ever doubt Him, or, knowing His love for us, should ever be unhappy! How often we detect ourselves considering whether *we* are good or not rather than whether God is! trying to rejoice in discovering that our hearts are in a believing and lowly and joyful and altogether amiable and admirable condition, instead of rejoicing in the love and faithfulness and holiness of God! It is like an object that had been put into the sunshine, and had felt the brightness and cheerfulness of the light, leaving it, and trying to get itself into the same state of feeling and enjoyment as it had while the sun was shining on it, and making itself miserable because it could not succeed. Our only course is to get back to the sunshine again, "*Rejoice in the Lord* always"; "*Delight thyself in the Lord*, and He will give thee the desires of thine heart." Compel your heart to give up its secrets; make it tell you what it is rejoicing in.

To-day there is no meeting of any sort. I intend spending it in visiting a little, in having a little intercourse with the family, and the chief part of it I hope to be alone with God, the best and most heart-satisfying and cheering company in the whole world.

Ever yours lovingly,

The secret of peace, wealth and power.

Bushfoot, 25/5/76.

MY DEAR E.,

Mary reminds me of your wish that I should send you a few lines, which I am very glad to do. I need not send you news, for she will likely give you all there is, nor need I attempt to tell you about this neighbourhood. "The Giant's Causeway" and the entire coast are too fine for any words I could find to describe. Nor will I say anything of my own work; considering the resources open to my use it is very small indeed, and I may well be ashamed to speak of it. But I will tell you something I have been learning of the grace of One in praising whom you and I will never tire throughout eternity.

Three things especially have struck me much of late. It is now nearly seventeen years since I stepped, by God's grace, out of myself, and built my sure hope for eternity on the risen Son of God. All this time I have been learning more and more of the treachery, unbelief, instability, ingratitude, foolishness, falseness, foulness, in short, the boundless and bottomless evil of my own heart. What an unutterable joy it is all through one's entire being that the death of Jesus Christ delivers me from the whole of it! You have heard this often, but if you have a heart as sinful as mine you will not be tired of hearing it again and again.

My second comfort which I also wish to pass on to you is that faith holds the key to all Christ's unsearchable riches. All fulness dwells in Him, and all is ours, and we are complete in Him. This wonderful truth has given me more comfort than I can tell to anyone. Yet it needs another to complete it—which I have been slower of learning—viz., that by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit

Christ is constantly with us, and undertakes for us, for all that we need, every moment of every hour of every day and night. I think that I have often turned the knowledge of my place in Christ into a kind of bondage, thinking of my responsibility in view of *such* a place, and how much God expected from one so greatly blessed. No ; God is always the giver ; we are to expect all things from God ; self must in every way be put aside and buried, and God must be everything.

I hope you have seen the difference between learning a thing in your head, even from the Bible, and learning it in your conscience from the Holy Spirit. Few Christians that I know have thus learned all these three things.

Affectionately yours,

How to study the Bible to profit.

Ballymena, 29/8/76.

MY DEAR E.,

I can very well understand how difficult you find it to study the Holy Scriptures systematically ; but profit is not always proportionate to the time given. A little while, when the heart is hungry for food and really seeks it from God, does us more good than a careless heart will gain in many hours. After all, the teaching of God's Book is very simple. Deep speculations, that need much intellect, and fill large volumes, do us comparatively little good. "Brethren" are beginning to write libraries like those who went before them, as if their Bible was too hard for plain people to understand. I almost wish such books were all burnt, if that would have the effect of keeping those who read them more at their Bibles. Even the Bible, however, may be much read and little

gained from it. *One* verse that makes God's presence and His love in Christ real to our hearts is worth chapters without that. Have you not seen how all kinds of truth can be talked of and speculated about with as little worship and reverence as propositions in mathematics? "This is life eternal," not to know the Bible, but "to know *Thee*, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent" (John xvii. 3). So if your many cares about your children and other things take you much to *God Himself*, a little of the Bible, much pondered on and well used, will keep your soul from starving. One great good children do to all parents is that they keep them from being absorbed in themselves, which is the greatest of earthly miseries; but it is a still greater good when they take them to God, and make the promises of God in the Bible, and the character of God given there, needful and precious to the soul.

Ever yours affectionately,

Our God is neither little nor ungenerous.

Ballymena, 1/2/77.

MY DEAR E.,

I trust you are keeping in the light, holding your heart up in the sunshine of God's grace, and letting that grace drive out all clouds and darkness. When you trusted the Lord Jesus, and submitted to be saved by His blood, you made no engagements of any sort to God; you cannot therefore break them. It was *He* who promised and not you; you simply trusted His promises to you. Do the same to the end. Even if you sin, there is a promise to meet it. If you find much ungodliness, instability, unbelief, and I know not what evil besides in your heart, there are promises to meet all this.

You are not Ishmael, and your standing in the family does not depend on your behaviour ; it depends on the unchangeable grace of God. You are an Isaac—a child of God for ever. But your happy knowledge of this everlasting relationship to God will influence your behaviour. *It will keep you from sin ;* it will make you ashamed if you do sin, and draw you to your Father's bosom to confess it, and make you sing as a happy child in your Father's house from morning to night.

The believers about here have been in a rather low, sleepy condition spiritually ; but I see signs of their waking up, at least a little. I believe this little will become more, just as you rub your eyes in the morning, and, when you see the pleasant light round about you, you wake up thoroughly and rise, and begin to bestir yourself. God has given us a good deal of blessing in this place in a steady, quiet way, and I am expecting a good deal more. For we have not been trusting a little God nor an ungenerous one, but a mighty and a gracious one, who is the more delighted the more He gives, and nothing pleases and nothing honours Him so much as our expecting a great deal from Him. One of Israel's worst sins was *limiting* "the Holy One of Israel" (Ps. lxxviii. 41).

Ever affectionately,

Care as to what we sanction by our presence.

Ballymena, Undated.

MY DEAR SIR,

A card of admission to the soirée in the Protestant Hall, connected with the installation of Mr. S.—, was kindly sent me. There is no other name on it than yours, as the one expected to preside, and on that account I write to you to express my thanks for this courtesy.

I have been for several weeks engaged to attend a meeting of believers for Christian fellowship, some miles out in the country, to-morrow evening, so that it would be impossible for me to accept this invitation.

But seeing how entirely the principles of the Word of God regarding Christian ministry are set aside in the various denominations of Christendom, it would be impossible for me with a good conscience before God to be present on such an occasion, and thus appear to sanction what I am persuaded is contrary to the written Word.

Besides, one will doubtless be present, in the highest place of honour in the Synod of which Mr. S—— becomes a member, who has published that natural men “*possess the power of believing in Christ in the sense enjoined by the apostles*”; that “*between believing in the Lord Jesus Christ and being saved lies an interval of time, long or short, according to the will of God*”; that “*God has nowhere promised that our salvation shall be immediate on our believing*”; and similar statements subversive of the very foundations of the gospel. In place of requiring him to retract and condemn these statements, his brother ministers have given him a high place of honour. You cannot but see in this another weighty reason for my refusing to attend a meeting of this character.

But if Mr. S—— proves to be indeed a man of God, preaching the pure gospel of a present salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and seeking earnestly and truly to win souls for God, no one will more heartily rejoice than I. Through God’s mercy I belong to the body of Christ; and every addition to the number or holiness of believers, through whatever instrumentality, is a gain to me, for which I am bound to thank God.

Yours very truly,

Heavenly treasure in an earthen vessel needs guarding.

Upper Clapton, 20/4/77.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I trust you are abiding in happy fellowship with God, reckoning self dead with Christ, and living by faith on Him who is now our righteousness and life. Satan is resolved to rob us if he can of the heavenly treasure which God has put into us, and we need the shield of faith always, and much watchfulness and prayer.

Ever yours affectionately in our Lord Jesus,

God's provision for our sins.

Ballymena, 18/3/78.

MY DEAR —,

Thank you much for the volume on John's Gospel you have kindly sent me, which reached me on my birthday. I have looked a little into the volume and see it is by Mr. J. G. Bellett, and, like all he wrote, is full of fine meditative insight into the words and character of our Lord Jesus.

I have little that is new or interesting to tell. Were I to speak of myself I could draw only a dark picture, the worst part of it being that I live so little on the fulness that dwells in our Lord Jesus. But grace is as real and unchanging as it is sweet. Even under the law, when God foresaw that Israel in the land would do evil and provoke Him to anger, He provided for their sin by promising that, if when carried captive they turned to Him and sought Him with all their hearts, He would be found of them, for He was merciful; and under the

gospel we are told that "if any man sin we have an advocate," and "if we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive." The grace of a holy God could not be more free.

Yours ever affectionately,

Knowledge of ourselves makes us tender-hearted.

Ballymena, 1/4/78.

MY DEAR —,

I send you back —'s letter. What we have learned about human nature from God's Word, and from our own experience, must keep us from surprise at or hardness with her. You would say so if you knew all about me—but only God who loves me and has forgiven me does that.

I was inclined to feel considerably provoked last week to find that — had actually been learning to smoke, and had somehow provided himself with indiarubber pouch, pipe, case, etc. I hope it is over, though one cannot be sure, but it does make me anxious about him. I can only trust in God.

My great need is *increase of faith*. I find my nature sadly opposed to living each moment consciously a life of faith on the Son of God; so, if you are asking help for me at the throne, you will know what to intreat for me. I think I never went to London so unfit in every way, humanly speaking, for the work; nothing but faith *in God* decides me to go at all.

Ever yours affectionately,

The preacher should aim not merely to preach well.

Kilburn, 30/4/78.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

Do not cease to pray for me, especially that my eye may be made and kept single, and that I may be kept leaning on God. The truth of our fellowship with Him has been a very great and real help in my little work for Him since I came here; only I sometimes fear that there may be a greater desire secretly in my heart to preach well, than to have souls saved and Jesus glorified. I have searched my heart much on this subject, and prayed often and earnestly to God about it.

Yours ever in our Lord,

Availing prayer; our knowledge of one another in heaven.

London, W., 10/5/78.

MY DEAR E.,

As to prayer, we must be careful about our motives in asking; "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me" (Ps. lxvi). We often need to cry, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me." Then we have the promise of guidance by the Holy Spirit with respect to *what we ask God for*, in Rom. viii. Of course this implies a broken will. Without this there can be no guidance, no submission, no faith. "My judgment is just," our Lord Jesus said. Why? Not because I am the Son of God and cannot err. He took the lowly way that we are to take after Him. "My judgment is just; *because I seek not mine own will*" (John v. 30). Thus guided in lowliness of heart, to ask according to God's will, we ought to have, nay, we *cannot but* have, entire confidence as to getting the very things we ask for.

But we must search our hearts carefully to see that self is not the centre instead of God. If we begin "Hallowed be *Thy* name, *Thy* kingdom come, *Thy* will be done," we may go on, "Give us," etc., and be quite sure that the last will be answered in God's good way and time quite as surely as the first. *Why* do you wish your children saved? Is *your* happiness first, or *theirs*? or is it solely the glory of God in their eternal salvation?

It is monstrous to think that we cannot be, or ought not to be, certain, that, guided by the Word—as I have tried to point out—the very things we ask of God will be granted. Why, this is exactly what our Lord Jesus commanded us—"Whatsoever things ye desire, when ye pray, *believe that ye receive them*, and ye shall have them." If your daughter asked *you* for something she really needed and that you could properly give her, you would feel it to be most cruel and unchildlike in her if she had not entire confidence that her dear mother would give her what she asked. And shall we treat our good God with less confidence than your child would treat you?

As to knowing one another in heaven, surely if Peter, James and John *in imperfect flesh* knew Moses and Elias *in glory*, they will know them much sooner and more certainly when they are in glory themselves. And as to our feelings in heaven about those who are saved and lost, we had better wait till we get there. In the meantime, let all the tenderness and anxiety of our hearts go out after our dear ones *now* while they may be saved. Your dear daughter was quite right in saying, "We shall have *hearts* in heaven"; but how those hearts will regard things when the full knowledge of God will flood them with light, we cannot yet know. But we can wait to learn.

Yours ever lovingly,

Our God is a Healer, a Saviour, a Giver.

Birnam, 22/9/78.

MY DEAR A.,

I think it was my having put up and addressed Spurgeon's two sermons touching the Thames disaster for you that put it first into my head to write to you, for I wanted to call your attention to them, and ask you to read them with care. I think you will find them worth a careful reading, especially, I believe, the one on "Is the young man safe?" The other is very good too; but that one struck me most. A few sentences in it about self-possession under trouble, and against worry, would be worth both your while and mine to weigh and carry out. But *much* in it is good.

I have been examining myself heedfully to-day on a certain matter, and I would fain set you in the same track about yourself: *How far am I trusting God?* I have been greatly shocked to find how little I have been really counting on God's keeping His promises, how little I have in my heart been expecting Him to do *in* me and *for* me. I am not sorry at the pain the discovery has caused me; I hope He who has thus wounded will heal. It is dreadful to treat God as if He were nobody, or as if He were a hard *man*, requiring much, and unwilling to give. Then to groan over this disease of unbelief in us is only a continuance of unbelief: for it is not counting on God being as good as His Word, and "healing *all* our diseases"—this one among the rest. He does not expect us to cure ourselves. *He* is the Healer; He is not Moses; He is a Saviour, a Giver, One who performs all things for us. I hope you will not merely approve all this in a few set words on paper, but that God will stir up your heart about it, and comfort and help you through it, as

to some little degree He has in my own case. Indeed I was in much need of being humbled and helped, as He knew.

Ever your affectionate brother,

The balance-sheet of faith.

Ballymena, 11/12/78.

MY DEAR E.,

How my mind runs back to old times as I write down your name, and recall you as you used to look in Belfast, or Newtonards. It quite perplexes me to think of you as the wife of a worthy husband and the guide of your own house, and the mother of quite a flock of children. But I reflect that he who is writing to you is no longer the same that he was in those days. There is more hair on my face than custom then allowed me to wear, but it is fast getting white. My head, too, is getting sprinkled with the same colour, and if your eyes were here to see me, you would see many other changes that escape my own eyes and the eyes of those who see me daily. So it is no longer the young man writing to the girl, but the middle-aged (I don't like yet to call myself *old*) to the matron. How different life is to us now from what it looked then ! How much more real and serious, and, from my inmost heart I can say, how much more *happy* ! Nothing at this moment would bribe me, if the thing were possible, to go back five and twenty years. What would be the gain compared to the loss ? A lighter step, freer limbs, a clearer voice, sounder teeth, a smoother cheek and forehead, and a little better lease of time. But balance these against having formed the acquaintance of the Lord Almighty, and having become His son ; against

having become united to the Lord Jesus Christ ; against having the Holy Spirit daily and hourly comforting and teaching me ; against the *sure hope* of an eternity of blessedness with the Friend who died for me—and *these just at the door !* Would you and I not be mad to wish for a moment to escape the wrinkles or the cares of our present time, even if we could, at such a cost ? No, thank God, it is better *now*, and it is still better on before. So, whatever cross from within or without we have to carry, we will by God's grace take it up cheerfully and courageously and press on, leaning on our Lord Jesus till we reach the crown.

I hope you can send me a good account of your growth in the life of faith, that you are learning to find out your defects and sins without being discouraged by them, and to get the victory by rejoicing in what you see in the Lord.

I will only add that the Lord's work in this place and neighbourhood is at present peculiarly interesting ; the door in many places is wide open. If the Lord enable you to do so, help us with your prayers. You know that we cannot cut off the thousands of godly men whom J. N. Darby has excommunicated, and are therefore not "in fellowship" with him. I hope we fear our Master in heaven too much either to do, or to submit to, what we know to be wrong, or are not certain to be right, *from His Word*. But though on account of this I could not be "received" in your meeting if I went to Toronto, it does not separate your *heart* and mine, or make you less interested in a work that you know I am seeking to do honestly in fellowship with our common Lord.

Yours affectionately,

Faith is the heart's deep Amen to God's faithfulness.

Omagh, 6/3/79.

MY DEAR M——,

I will give you for your comfort an old text, which, though it has yielded much to many again and again, is as full as ever. "My grace is sufficient for thee; My strength is made perfect in weakness." I think we are in danger of losing much of the help that this was meant to give us, by not embracing it in the very condition and circumstances in which we find ourselves. For instance, I believe I have often done that with regard to my *head*. If *it* were only strong! As if *then* His grace would be sufficient for me, and not *now*. What would be the use of a grace that would not suit a weak head? Is God to get glory only by helping those who are strong? Our gain and His glory, on the contrary, is that when we are lame we take the prey. When God gives us a promise, and says to us, "Now, can I, and will I?" we ought not to say, "Yes, Lord, if"——; but unreservedly, from our hearts, with no "if" whatever, say, "Yes, Lord, Thou canst, and Thou assuredly wilt." "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."

Ever yours lovingly,

The society of God.

Ballymena, 7/5/79.

MY DEAR ——,

My chief resource is the Bible and prayer, or rather that good God who speaks to us in the Bible and to whom we speak out our hearts in prayer. It is as natural for hard thoughts of Him to spring up in our hearts as it is

for dandelions and other weeds to spring up among the gravel in the garden paths, because it is not natural to any of us to think of Him as He is seen in Christ Jesus. We think of Him as a fault-finder, a condemner, a requirer, an exactor. If we always thought of Him as a forgiver, a restorer, a healer, One who never wants anything from us (for what *could* WE give HIM?), but who every moment is giving us gifts, would we not delight more in His society? I trust, dear —, you are enjoying much of it. I hope too that J. is well, and that in these times of much complaining in business he is taking special pains to abound in thanksgiving.

Yours lovingly in Him,

Divine teaching must be enquired after.

Ballymena, 21/5/79.

MY DEAR E.,

Do you not often find that the care of such a large household comes between you and the presence of God? I have often noticed with sorrow how seldom sisters after their marriage grow in spiritual-mindedness. I think there is a secret to be learned by which every care and burden would bring us, and keep us, nearer to God, but alas! few seem anxious to learn it. May you, dear E., be one of the wise and happy few! There is only one Teacher who can impart the secret, and He teaches it only to those whose hearts value it more than hid treasure, who search after it and cry out for it, and, though they miss it a hundred times through the folly of their evil hearts, yet still seek after this secret, for they know its priceless value and are sure it may be had, and so will not and cannot rest, or let God rest, till they have found

it. And when they do find it, they take no credit for the discovery, for it is the gift of God. Look at that striking passage in Prov. ii. 1-6.

Ever yours affectionately,

The Holy Ghost makes it easy to abide in Christ by faith.

Grosvenor Square, London, 13/6/79.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I think Mary — has put her trust in her Saviour, and I am glad she was received and baptized. I trust she will go on learning in the school of Christ to know more of herself, of the evil of sin, and of the fulness of the grace of God. But oh! when shall we hear that God has had regard to our cries, and has begun to quicken souls? What is hindering?

I had the privilege of preaching to from 800 to 1,000 last Lord's-day evening, and I trust some were drawn to the Saviour. Will you pray for me, and ask others to pray? It is not for me; it is for the Master Himself; for in the case of every soul saved, and every Christian helped, the work is wholly the Lord's, and the glory all His. "Prayer shall be made *for Him* continually."

I was preaching last night on abiding in Christ, and was greatly struck with the necessity pointed out in the 15th of John of working in fellowship with Christ, if there is to be any real (and still more so, if there is to be *much* real) abiding fruit for God. "He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit, for without Me ye can do nothing." The Holy Ghost having come, it ought not to be a labour to abide in Christ; it is only unbelief that makes it difficult. May God teach us more deeply His simple, easy way of faith!

If we aim at *the fruit*, we are likely to miss it. If we aim at abiding in Christ, the fruit is certain.

Yours affectionately in our Lord,

In the new covenant God gives everything TO us, and works everything IN us.

Upper Clapton, 5/7/79.

MY DEAREST M——,

This is my first letter from Clapton. It is now nine years since I came here first: I can hardly believe it, so short does the space appear to look back on. What a cause for thanksgiving that amid such weakness and frequent backsliding of heart I have been so kept all the time in my Christian course that I can come back with comfort, and be received with confidence and welcome. How different it might have been! and but for the grace of God it certainly *would have been*. And what a still greater cause for thankfulness it is that the future is undertaken for me by One who cannot lie, who is well able to fulfil His engagements, and who is Love.

I am afraid you are not carrying out some things I have been pressing on you in my letters. One thing was to take your work hour by hour *from* God, and then lean on Him for help to do it *for* Him. Do seek after this. You will not then "look back over a busy day and see little that you have done." No, it will be thus: "I have been doing no very great or wonderful things to-day, mostly things in themselves trifling; but they were the things my Father gave me to do, and I have finished them, and am content and thankful." And *do not* be cast down when you don't attain what you ought and what you wish. One who, as you know, has so often committed

the same folly may well give counsel against it. Has God not engaged to forgive and to help us to do better? Is it not far wiser (and, shall I say, easier?) to trust Him to do these two specific things, *pardon* and *heal*, than to grumble over one's self and get downhearted? Remember the old covenant has passed away, and we are under the *new*. You could not do better than *often* read and ponder the new covenant in Heb. viii., and the contrast between it and the old covenant in 2 Cor. iii. I know you will think this over carefully.

As to friends, the best way is to look at their faults as discipline by which *God* tries us, and to return love for coldness and kindness for neglect. You must not expect more from people than is in them.

Ever yours lovingly,

Outward testimony must spring from an inward root.

Upper Clapton, 5/7/79.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

There is a great opening here for the Gospel; many seem anxious and thankful to hear it. How many receive it into their hearts is another matter; and even of those who, one hopes, do thus receive it, how many receive it deep down into their hearts, and let it shape their characters and rule their lives?

The number of Christians who anywhere maintain a close and humble walk with God is not very large according to my observation. To get people to submit to "baptism," to gather after a particular way at "the Supper," etc., may not be very easy; but it is infinitely easier than to get them to deny themselves daily, to habitually yield up their wills to God's, and to make it the aim of their

lives to please and honour Him and not themselves. This, I think, is the reason why George Müller takes the course which many have found fault with. I believe he aims at getting principles rooted in people's hearts, out of which daily obedience and habitual walking with God will grow, rather than getting them set right on baptism and church principles. Whether he might not do more for the latter, without diminishing his zeal for the former, is of course a matter of question. But I am sure he has chosen by far the more important of the two. I tremble now when I see a person who professes to have been converted at a "revival" meeting, asking for baptism and church fellowship. If his desire for these spring from a principle of reverence and obedience, out of which all holy living will come, nothing could be more delightful ; but do we always find it so ? Would I be too severe if I asked, Do we *often* find it so ? May God's good Spirit deepen His true work in Christians' hearts, and in *my* heart, for His own name's sake !

Believe me affectionately yours in our Lord Jesus,

God's interests should be ours.

Upper Clapton, 25/7/79.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

The expenses ought to be no difficulty. For all the years we met in H. S., when, as far as I remember, I was responsible for the various expenses, I found no lack at any time. Of course, I was ready to use my last sixpence to meet any outlay required. If I had thought it was for the good of the brethren, I would have most gladly undertaken for all the expenses in W. S., and had no fear of being unable to meet them. But I could only

do it on this principle, that *it is God's business*, in which, so far from grudging anything which I spend, I will be thankful to have the privilege of spending all that I have. To have a private purse of my own, the interests of which I will attend to first, and then, after *it* is well attended to, give any little that I can for the Lord's work in my hands, would ruin everything. All would then break down. I fear this *is* the principle on which many Christians live, and on which they deal with God's work. Their own ceiled houses first, and then a little thatch, if they can afford it, for God's house afterwards. I am sure the other principle is workable, for I have tried it ; and I am quite certain it is the truest and happiest.

Ever yours affectionately in our Lord Jesus,

How to get out of a fog.

London, N., 11/2/80.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

The best thing I can tell you this morning is that He who spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, is the same still as when He made that great sacrifice for our sake ; how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things ? Let us then wish for nothing which He has *not* promised ; and let us want nothing that He *has* promised. Why should we ? I mean, why should we want *anything* He has promised ? Can He lie ? or forget ? or find Himself unable to be as good as His word ?

I was in great trouble last week, and I am going to tell you how I got out of it. I am not now speaking of trouble from outward circumstances, though I had that too ; but in my soul things had grown misty, and inwardly

I was like a person in a London fog. I could not see the Companion that never leaves me, and things that in the daylight are seen to be harmless, looked dreadful and terrifying—like giants and hobgoblins.

It came into my heart to consider, Have I any promise from God on these matters which are so troubling me? Is there anything He has *definitely promised* to give me or do for me? So I hunted through His promises till I got one or two that applied exactly to my need. Then I said to myself: either God must tell a lie—and the passing away of the heavens and the earth would be a trifle compared with that—or He must and will do what He has here said. That took me out of the mist at once, and of course the promises were kept fully: *how* could it be otherwise?

Since then I have been helped in a great many other things in the same way, and I have thought that perhaps God's Spirit would extend the help to you also if I were to tell you this bit of my own experience. It is a very simple bit, for is this not the very elementary lesson in the school of faith? But what then? Have we not often to re-learn our a, b, c? I have. And as for you, I am certain there is not one fault you have to overcome, not one enemy to conquer, not one piece of service to perform, not one need you require to have met, that there is not some clear, precise promise for in Scripture, but I am far from being as certain that these promises will be fulfilled to you. If I am mistaken, then one so full of faith will forgive me. If I am not, then may I ask you to look out the very promises that suit your case, and then ask your heart whether it is actually going to call God a liar, or whether He is going to do what He has said.

Do not aim after great feelings. Take the way of faith, which does not consider its own feelings one way or another, but dwells on what *God* thinks and feels.

Yours affectionately in our Lord Jesus,

Peniel is the true place of blessing.

London, N., 7/8/80.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I feel *much* for you all with reference to this matter concerning ——. It has pained me more than I could tell, but it is about home that *the reproach* of it will be felt. If the Lord so guide I will write to them. Remember the word, "Ye which are spiritual, *restore*." Which of us has a right to cast a stone?

Last night I preached with much comfort on Jacob at Peniel. How much we have that God has to wrestle out of us before He can give us the blessing. I suppose it is to this I owe my weak head and infirmities. May we be mercifully kept from needing to be allowed to fall into open sin, for the sake of the dear and worthy name by which we are called. I suppose Peter's self-confidence could be cured in no other way.

Yours in our Lord Jesus,

The victory is won.

London, N., 13/1/81.

MY DEAR E.,

You have had some sharp trials during the year. I do not say *we* have had none; but mercy lies very close to judgment in the Christian's song. While the sharp trials might be reckoned on your fingers, how many hands would be needed to reckon the mercies on?

The verse I got most help from at the commencement of the year was in Luke 1: "That we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, *all the days of our life.*" There is not a single enemy out of whose hand Christ by His cross has not delivered us; we need not, therefore, be troubling about them ourselves. Our deliverance is accomplished, so that with cheerful hearts and free spirits we may give ourselves to glorify God and to do good to others.

Lovingly,

God brings back His banished.

London, N., 14/6/81.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

We are not to have our legitimacy called in question through want of chastisement; but surely, amid all, praise well becomes us. He Himself is ours for ever.

I have heard that ——* is applying for fellowship. I hope this is true, and that he is doing it in a spirit which commends him as being truly humbled, so that he can be received with confidence and comfort. A broken bone ill set has to be broken over again, and is worse to heal than ever. But what a triumph for the Lord if this dear brother is truly restored to Him and to us! Do tell me *all* you know of him and his present circumstances.

Ever yours affectionately in our Lord,

* One who had to be suspended from fellowship.

Fellowship among saints is a training school for the heart.

Leominster, 24/8/81.

MY DEAR M——,

I keep well, and on the whole am enjoying the meetings. My want of enjoyment in them is as useful perhaps as the highest enjoyment of them would be. One gets used to pull in single harness, and is in danger of losing the capacity of running comfortably in a team. The discomfort that may be experienced when trying to get on with others shows the bad habits that one has been forming, and the need of being helped on that point.

At the same time I must not leave on you the impression that I am not enjoying these conference meetings now. For I am, and in part greatly, and hope to-day and to-morrow to enjoy them still more, and from them all to get great good. And the private intercourse with brethren is exceedingly pleasant.

Ever yours, etc.,

God's great truths call forth worship.

Leominster, 25/8/81.

MY DEAR M——,

I am enjoying the [Conference] meetings increasingly, and also greatly enjoying the private fellowship with brethren for which the brief intervals and the meal times give opportunity. I have seldom been in a better meeting than we had last night. Mr. Groves surpassed himself in speaking on the sovereignty of the grace of God; a brother followed briefly and well; then Mr. Dyer wisely and most ably and profitably filled up and guarded and strengthened what Mr. Groves had so well said. Robt.

Chapman closed with the weighty words which only he of all men I have known or heard seems given to use. We all felt it good to be there, and to worship in the power of the truths we had been listening to. After supper I read David's words to God in 1 Chron. xvii. as the best expression of our hearts in contemplating the great things which God had opened up to us.

Ever, etc.,

The benefits of taking God into our calculations constantly.

London, N., 1/11/81.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

You will be tempted to think that I have forgotten you, it is now so long since I wrote to you. That would be very far from true; and I also know that you have not forgotten me. One Spirit dwells in us; we are members of one body; we have one Father; we are expecting to spend eternity together in one home. It is not easy to separate those who are linked together so firmly and closely.

While I was in Scotland in Sept., E—— was led to trust in the Lord Jesus through Mr. Spurgeon's preaching on Sept. 11th. I believe the work is real. He seems entirely changed; he is up in the morning reading his Bible, and often out in the evening at meetings or in Christian work. Our servant also was converted while I was away that month, so that we are now a household in Christ. Truly God is good.

I think I never enjoyed my work for the Lord so much as I am now doing, or saw more apparent fruit from it. Through grace I am taking God more into my calculations *constantly*; and where God is counted on He is sure to

bless. How could our Father do anything but help His children? How could our Master do anything but stand by His servants? How could the God of salvation do anything but save? How could the God of all grace help being gracious?

Ever yours in Him,

What cannot the Cross deliver from!

Ballymena, 15/11/81.

MY DEAR M——,

We had a fine Bible Reading; I suppose there were 70 or 80 present, and the Lord gave us searching and profitable truth. It was on 1 Cor. ii.—(1) Paul's heaven-bestowed wisdom in keeping such carnal Christians as the Corinthians *at the Cross*, and not taking them away into deep and high things before they were ready for them. (2) The need of the Holy Spirit in order *truly* to learn the things of God.

Some young men have been hashing up things they have picked up out of Kelly's and Darby's tracts and books about having life before faith or forgiveness, etc., and one or two heady ones, who ought to be at the Cross learning to subdue their temper and pride, are in danger of being taken up with these speculations, and are trying to get the rest to argue about them, fancying themselves ever so much more enlightened than the poor brethren who cannot take in the new "light." Of the many evil spirits which have gone out in these last days, the proud and lying spirit which has seduced the poor "Darbyites," is one of the most dangerous. The great mass of the Christians here, however, are being kept safe: and even the few that are a little giddy at present, will, I trust,

get over the poison they have taken, and be all right again. So I pray and hope.

I made no reference to these things last night; but tried to imitate Paul, and showed the depth and extent of the deliverance effected by the Cross, and how little most Christians understand or enjoy it. Think of Christians who indulge unsubdued tempers, selfish, covetous hearts, and worldly lusts of one sort and another, arguing how Jewish saints got life, and whether the Church is to pass through the great tribulation or not! How Satan must chuckle when he sees them thus employed!

Ever yours affectionately,

What reasons we have for owning Jesus as Lord!

Ballymena, 18/11/81.

DEAR M——,

I preached to a good number gathered together, on Israel's reasons for choosing David as king: (1) They were his bone and his flesh; (2) He had fought their battles for them, even in Saul's time; (3) God had appointed him to be Israel's feeder and ruler.

I am concerned to hear that A——'s arm is worse. I had hoped the attack was over. Tell her to be sure to be much with God. There is a good deal of easy-going Christianity abroad, little real prayer, little zeal for the Lord's work and glory, little heart-enjoyment of God Himself. God wants to waken up His children out of this, and an obstinate inflammation in the nerve of the arm may be His way of doing it as fast as another. Tell her, if she gets her heart into a better state, her arm may soon be better too.

Yours ever affectionately,

The Lord will bless His people with peace.

Omagh, 22/11/81.

MY DEAR M——,

Yesterday I went to Coleraine and saw A—— C——. She is very weak and ill, but not so much worse than when I saw her in July as I expected, and her heart is so truly and sweetly satisfied with God, that the healthiest and strongest, who are not at the same secret spring of joy, might well envy her.

In the evening we had a very large Bible Reading, and on the whole, a very good one. Mr. —— was not there. I don't know why. He is full of exclusive "points" at present, instead of keeping in lowly fellowship with God, and, unless mercy prevent, is as likely as possible to be in the mire again before long. His prayers are full of judging others, and manifest no *self*-condemnation, and no heart dealings with the living God.

What a storm we had last night! Had you one in London? In the middle of the night Rose, the servant, came to the door frightened. It seems a tall chimney towers over the room which I now occupy, and Miss M—— feared it might fall and perhaps kill me, as poor Mrs. Jas. Griffin was killed some years ago. However I lifted up my heart to God; felt assured I was safe; read for half an hour; put my good ear down on the pillow, and soon fell into the sound sleep that I needed so much. Love to all.

Yours ever,

Let us give God the present moment.

London, N., 27/12/81.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I trust you are growing in the knowledge of Christ. The 3rd chapter of 2 Corinthians has been comforting me greatly. Seven things there are said to be ministered to us by the gospel, which the law could not give. (1) Life, v. 6 ; (2) the Holy Spirit, v. 8 ; (3) righteousness, v. 9 ; (4) that which *remaineth*, which lasts for ever, v. 11 ; (5) liberty, v. 17 ; (6) an Object for our heart—" beholding . . . the glory of the Lord," v. 18 ; (7) transformation into His image, v. 18.

At this moment, while I am writing, these things are *mine*. At this moment, as you are reading, these things are *yours*.

Some saints base their faith on their feelings ; they believe as much of the Bible as they feel in themselves to be true. For instance, they don't believe that their old man was crucified, because they feel him still alive in them ; they don't believe they are delivered from their enemies, because they are often beset by them, and sometimes beaten.

Others notice that their feelings and experience fall short of the statements of the Bible ; and yet they cling to what the Bible says, and believe it even against their own experience. This brings conflict. *But it ends in their getting their experience and feelings up to their faith.* The others can never make much real progress.

Another thing which has helped me, is remembering what Jesus is to me *now*, and what I am to Him. We can only give God a moment at a time—the moment that is passing *now*. God pardons all our iniquities *now* ; He

heals all our diseases *now* ; He delights in us *now*, as a father delights in his children. How could I be anyway better off *now*, at this very moment, than I am ?

Yours affectionately in Christ,

“Again I say, Rejoice.”

London, N., 20/5/82.

MY DEAR —,

In the matter of temporal things, wait stedfastly and patiently on God. With reference to debt—when a man has property, and his creditors know this and are content, one can hardly say, in the true sense of the word, that he is in debt. So at least I judge ; only this would need in practice to be carefully guarded. You certainly do well to avoid, as far as you possibly can, the running up of bills, and to counsel — to scrupulous and conscientious care against getting into *debt*.

As to God's hiding His face from you, that is altogether a mistake. *He* never sees you apart from Christ ; you are looking at yourself apart from Him ; that is, you are not living *by faith*. You look at the sin in you without believing in your heart that you are delivered from it by the death of Christ ; that He took it, and that it is yours no longer. You *cannot* rejoice in the good state of your own soul—it would in no case be safe to do so—and you *do not* rejoice in the Lord, as surely there is infinitely good reason for always doing. You cannot say, I have *done* well ; you cannot say, my soul is right and happy ; but you *can* say, the Lord Jesus has died for my sin ; *He* has become my strength and my salvation. Will you allow your heart to say that this is not enough ?

Ever affectionately in Him,

God never forsakes us.

London, N., 21/8/82.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

Grace, mercy, and peace be with you.

The Lord is good and faithful ; He has promised, *I will never leave nor forsake you*. I was yesterday tracing out the passages where He has said this—one in Genesis, to Jacob ; one in Deut. xxxi., to all Israel ; one in 1 Chron. xxviii., to Solomon ; one in Josh. i., to Joshua ; and one in Isaiah xli., to the poor and needy who seek water and cannot find it, and their tongue fails them for thirst.

All these passages are made ours in Heb. xiii. How *could* a father forsake his children, or a husband the wife of his bosom, or a man his own members ? How could God stain His honour or deny His own Word ?

It is now long since we both learned so much of Him that we could trust Him ; He has tried us since, but has He been a barren wilderness, or as waters that fail ?

He was with me yesterday—when I was little deserving of His help ; He is with me to-day, and He sends you through me the enclosed little gift with much brotherly love.

Yours affectionately in Him,

Both sides of the platter must be clean.

London, N., 21/11/82.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

Thank you very much for giving me so full an account of the meetings. It would not have been easy for you to have done anything that would please me more. I still take a great interest in them, and heartily thank God if the days of tithing mint, anise, and cummin are

gone, or even going, and if the weightier matters of the law are getting their right place. If saints were made to learn their evil ways, and their miserable defects and dwarfishness, and taught how to be filled with the Holy Ghost, not only would the mint stalks be all properly counted and duly tithed, but Christ Jesus would be glorified, our souls would be mightily enriched and strengthened for serving Him, and sinners would be converted to God. O dear brother, we need to be *holier men*; God's men; Jesus Christ's men; Holy Ghost men; men separated to God's use; owning in every breath Jesus Christ's redemption; cleansed and indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God. Then at length we shall be of some use to our Father and our Redeemer.

I am very well, and very much occupied in the Lord's work in various places around. Pray for me. The need here is without limits. I cannot say that the power and supply to meet it are less.

I could not be much happier out of heaven.

Yours affectionately in our Lord Jesus,

The secret of true holiness, unbroken happiness, and power for effectual service.

London, N., 27/12/82.

MY DEAR —,

I am glad you like Hawker, and that all the high things you have heard in brethren's addresses and read in their tracts have not spoiled your taste for the old-fashioned manna, small indeed as coriander seed, but sweet as wafers made with honey, which abounds in Hawker, Romaine, M'Cheyne, and other such "old masters" in Israel. Of course there are giants who can swallow a whole shoulder at a mouthful, and can afford

to despise such children's fare. I remember one such Goliath almost extinguishing me with his scorn, for quoting such a poor bat or owl of a writer as Bunyan, to a saint like him, who could look at the sun any day without winking. I dare say he could, like the prophet, have contracted himself to the dimensions of such a baby as Bunyan, but it would have cost him a great effort, and he didn't make it, but stood up to every cubit of his height and scoffed at poor little Bunyan and poor little me. I fancy he owed a good deal of his size to gas which he had swallowed out of tracts, and which had swelled him up. Let us keep small, dear brother, and we shall keep safe, and retain our taste for the children's fare. I know we are not to be always taking milk, and ought to be able to digest meat, but the meat is not the worse for being *boiled* in milk and broken small. At any rate I like the cakes with *the oil* in them: and when *it* is wanting, nothing makes up for it, and I fancy there used to be quite as much put in books as one finds now.

I hope you are getting to know Christ Jesus more as your life. You used to be a great man for standing a little bit off Christ, and very humbly groaning over yourself, and crying pitifully on Him to help you. Would it not be better to reckon yourself dead, and get *into* Christ, and stay there? Seriously, is not that what the Word of God commands us to do? Is it not what the Holy Spirit has come to enable us to do? Is it not the true Christian position and the true Christian experience? Are the expressions which tell of *the well of living water* INSIDE OF US, and *the rivers of living water flowing out of our bellies*, only pretty figures of speech, or ARE THEY TRUE?

I believe here lies the secret (1) of true holiness, (2) of unbroken happiness, (3) of power for effectual service.

There has been a good deal of sickness and trouble in the little circle closest about me ; but " all is right that seems most wrong, if it be His sweet will."

All good things attend you,

An indwelling Christ makes the heart sing.

London, N., 27/1/83.

MY DEAR —,

It was very kind of you to write me such a nice letter, and it gave me a great deal of pleasure. I felt glad that you can write so well, and spell so well ; glad that you have not forgotten old friends ; and very glad that you are better of the whooping cough. And then your dear mother's part added to the pleasure I had received from yours.

Nearly a whole year is past since I saw you, dear —, and I quite long to see you again. I suppose you are taller and wiser than when I saw you last March. How good God has been to you ever since then, and indeed all your life ! He has been very good to me too ; I have never been happier all my life. It is not having much money makes me happy ; I have very little ; and much or little of it never makes anyone happy. It is not having a comfortable home, though I *have* that, and am thankful for it. Nor is it having much work, which I like doing. *What satisfies my heart and makes it sing is that the Holy Spirit has brought Jesus Christ to live in it.* That is the well of living water of which Jesus spoke to the woman in John iv.

But I must close. I was concerned to hear of your aunt's death ; she was such a fine, cheery, kindly, Christian old woman.

Your affectionate friend,

Divine holiness has its counterfeits.

(To a Missionary.)

Undated.

DEAR BROTHER,

If we were to meet to-morrow, I suppose we would hardly recognize each other, so many years have elapsed since our one brief interview. Nevertheless, I remember you well in spirit, and by that remembrance, I think, will recognize you in the streets of the New Jerusalem, if we never see each other till we meet there. Is it fanciful to suppose that our appearance there will express to all who see us these two things : (1)—and this will be common to us all—*Whose* we are ; “ His Name shall be in their foreheads ” ; and (2) The peculiarities of our individual characters—our true personality ? We shall have nothing then that we shall wish to hide. Elijah, Moses, Lazarus, Abraham, etc., were at once recognized by those who saw them after their life on earth had ceased.

Often I feel ashamed in my very heart that in my own work here something worthy of THE NAME in which it is done is not accomplished. That was what the early disciples, when filled with the Holy Ghost, expected and *effected*. “ Signs and wonders *were* done ” in that holy Name. The Lord’s hand was stretched out *to heal*. AND HE IS STILL THE SAME ; His Spirit is still with us. His Name has lost none of its old power or value. *Why should we consent to accept less from God in that Name than those who were saved by it a few hundred years before us ?*

In your last letter you say, “ Far better to be sustained *through* a time of darkness and trial than to be kept *out of* it.” How true this is, and yet how reluctant we are to prove its truth ! How exceedingly unwilling to be put into circumstances which give God an opportunity of

abundantly helping us! We would rather be in the midst of plenty and *talk* about faith, than be in need, and *exercise* faith; perhaps I had better have said, than be in need, and have the joy of seeing the hand of our faithful God coming in to deliver us. For it *must* come in. When our Lord Jesus chose *the* place on this earth in which He could most honour God and exercise the greatest possible influence for good on men, He chose *the very lowest place*—the place in which, having no rank, no riches, no power, no human learning, God had unhindered opportunity of coming in for His help and supply; the place also that allowed men to see to the full all that God could do for and by one who, in uttermost need, perfectly relied on Him.

How close in His footsteps our beloved brother Paul followed! Hungry, thirsty, naked, buffeted, homeless, toiling as a labourer with his own hands, reviled, defamed, having nothing—but God; but having everything in Him: such was the life that Paul *chose* to live. For surely, if he had asked, God would have given him money and clothing and food without stint. But “there is a kind of faith that *refuses*, as well as a kind of faith that *obtains* deliverances.” And Paul must have seen that it would be more for the glory of the Lord and for the furtherance of the Gospel that his life should be a life of *trial*, than that it should be a life of *ease*. No doubt, therefore, he rather prayed that he should be borne up through the trials in which Christ was glorified, than for their removal—“Never mind *me*. I know that all is well with me for ever. Glorify *Christ*.”

I cannot send you much news. I suppose you see from the papers how Moody and Sankey are being led and used of God. Their recent visits to Cambridge and Oxford

seem to have been peculiar triumphs of the grace and power of God. But some of us see as little of this, and other prominent home work, as you do. We are living in a day of salvation, and even the feeble ones among the workers cannot afford much time to stare at what others are doing. Occasionally we are glad to do it for a little, if we can, that we may get our own hearts warmed, and learn to do our work better, or even that we may cheer our mightier brethren by showing our interest in their labours.

The *deepening of spiritual life* in the hearts of believers goes on side by side with the conversion of sinners. In this, as in Gospel work, no doubt mistakes are made, and extravagances committed; but for much good in it we can heartily thank God. Some time since, for the first time in my life, I attended what is called a Holiness meeting, feeling some curiosity to see what was taught and done there. Much of it was good, but much of it, on the other hand, was little likely to produce true holiness. One could not but be distressed by the attempt, sedulously made, to create physical excitement, by standing up and stamping, and clapping the hands, and singing favourite verses over and over again to rapid tunes, and waving handkerchiefs, and uttering volleys of prearranged "Amens" and "Hallelujahs." *Nervous disease* was much more likely to be produced by such means than *Gospel holiness*, and many would be in danger of mistaking the one for the other. Not less painful were some of the testimonies that young Christians were encouraged to give to *their own spotlessness*; one declared, with outstretched arms, that in him we beheld "an Israelite indeed in whom is no guile," and others said things of themselves not much less offensive. Still, it must be said that there

was *life* and *interest* all through ; and much less in the teaching to object to than I expected. Some who spoke had evidently got *true soul-deliverance*, and *the courage of cleanness* ; and, frankly, I feel less distress over even the mistakes and exaggerations of those who are longing for true holiness to God, such as Paul claimed (1 Thess. ii. 10, Phil. iii. 13-15, Gal. ii. 20, and elsewhere), than over the far more serious mistakes of those who cry out against "perfectionism," and are living in daily sin and conscious defeat, arguing that this is all that Christians are to expect on earth, and trying to satisfy themselves with a kind of visionary and imputed holiness which they have outside themselves in Christ. I like to have it *within*, and to hear a Christian say that he is *conscious* of having a well of living water *inside of him*. Of course, when he does, others would need to see it *flowing out*.

I fear that this is the point in which many Christians have erred, and to which their weakness is to be traced. Some have told me, after knowing forgiveness of sin for years, that they could only tell that they had the Holy Spirit by a *text of Scripture*. Many profess to have the Holy Spirit in their meetings, and to own His guidance, and yet the powerlessness, dulness, and unprofitableness often felt in them does not seem to shock them, as all false and unreal things ought to shock spiritual men. Scriptural forms and methods are very good, just as beautiful marble watercourses are very good. But what if there is no water in the latter ? And what if there is no spiritual life and power in the former ? When forms satisfied Israel how the blood rose into God's face ! "Bring no more vain oblations ; incense is an abomination to me ; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with ; it is iniquity, even the solemn

meeting." The very forms which He had commanded, when they became *mere* forms, He abhorred.

The Lord keep you a clean vessel, close to the Master's hand, and ready for His use !

Ever yours in Him,

Joy unspeakable.

London, N., 9/3/83.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I trust you are getting on well in every respect. Have you heard that all your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake ? that you have been taken into God's family, and are a son and heir of God ? that every enemy you have has been conquered and that you are a free man for ever ? and that the Holy Spirit has come to dwell in you to maintain you in your freedom and in your high place as God's son ? What bonfires have you kindled then ? What extravagances have you committed in your joy ? Alas, dear brother, do we not take things very coolly ? Our hearts hardly beat one stroke the faster as we claim privileges that might half turn the heads of archangels for joy and wonder !

Let us exult and sing about it far more, and everywhere preach complete deliverance through the blood of Jesus ! How many in D—— know it ? To the vast majority about us it is the strangest, least known, most undreamt of, of all news that could be told them.

Yours affectionately in our Lord Jesus,

God is our Shelter from inward and outward enemies.

London, N., 11/7/83.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

The removal of our props lets the weight fall more entirely on God. And when did He ever fail those who put their trust in Him?

I read with concern the account you gave of the trying state of things among the believers among whom you went in and out at ——. From other sources I know that all you say is true, and more too. I am thankful however that God is sustaining the faith of His people. It is strange that when there in February I was of hardly any use, and now my plans for going there in June have been broken up.

God did not see fit to allow me the honour of helping. Perhaps He saw I would do no good, or has other instruments that He means to use. As He pleases. His holy name be blessed for ever! I keep praying for the dear old place and people, and hope yet to visit them soon, and to rejoice in seeing their welfare.

Do you often read the Psalms? I am enjoying them very much at present. They seem so perfectly to suit the strange scene of conflict through which I have been passing. They are the utterances of a man with evil felt in him, and enemies about him, and who with every fibre of his being takes hold on God for help, just as I have to do myself.

Yours affectionately in our Lord,

Heart-breathings for entrance upon yet untrodden fields of Christian experience.

Birnam, Perthshire, 11/9/83.

MY DEAR —,

Count on God to keep you from feeling lonely, first by an increasing sense of His own presence and love, and then by giving you such earthly friendships as will be good for you. Ask Him to teach you more of what true communion with Him is. My own experience teaches me how much you have to learn on this point. I can look back and see the various steps by which I have advanced—alas! how slowly and how little—and how at every step I was ignorant of what I had not then learned; I mean unconscious of my deficiencies. I know that this is true for myself at the present stage at which I have arrived. It is not possible for me to know the defects in my experience, because I cannot know attainments yet unreached; only many faults and defects, which I get frequent glimpses of, shew me that there is much yet lacking in my communion with God, for if it were closer and deeper they would be cured. Our standing is perfect; that keeps me happy and at rest; but let us never give God rest till He leads us into the deep and pleasant valleys of fellowship with Himself which our eyes have not yet rested on, nor our feet explored.

Yours affectionately,

God dwells in us as in His temple.

Kingussie, N.B. 25/9/83.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

Since hearing from you last I have been moving about so much that I have not been able to write to you.

It was as much as I could do to secure time for necessary communion with God.

The Lord willing, I hope to leave here to-day, and after passing a few days further south, to move on in the end of the week to Dundee. I may spend a few days then in the West of Scotland on my way, as I hope to pay a visit to the North of Ireland. The Lord look through these plans, and sort out of them what is mine, and help in carrying out what is His !

I have been in good health since I last wrote to you, and in some true measure happy in the Lord. I am getting fast on toward the close of my earthly journey : half way through my 58th year. If I gave way to it I would often groan that I tread the heavenward way with so little steadiness, and am of so little use to Him who died for me. But " why should pardoned souls be sad ? " *God is mine.* Is not that enough ? A verse in Zephaniah that I once heard you preach from, has been giving me much comfort of late : " The Lord thy God *in the midst of Thee* is mighty : He will save." If that is said in the first place of Israel, *is it not still more for us, IN whom God has come to dwell as in His temple ?*

But the time for leaving by the train has come : so I must say, farewell.

Yours affectionately in our Lord Jesus,

One thing that marks God is happiness.

London, N., 31/12/83.

MY DEAR —,

Let me wish *you also*, dear —, a very happy New Year. I hope you are full of health and spirit, ready for your work when there is work to do, and for play when

play time comes, and heartily enjoying both. One thing that marks God is His happiness. The *blessed* God in 1 Tim. i. 11 means the *happy* God. And it is because He wishes us to be perfectly happy that He seeks to save us from all evil tempers and ways. He knows that these make everyone who indulges in them miserable. So be sure you notice all the bits of temper, and self-will, and other faults that break out, and ask Him to cure you of them, and make you white and bright and happy—*like Himself*.

I am very well and hardly remember ever being so busy ; but the good and kind God helps me and makes me very happy in working for Him.

I suppose you are full of cards, dolls (or are they over ?), plum-pudding, Xmas boxes and new year's gifts, and are burdened with the idleness of the long holiday. Well, dear —, enjoy yourself thoroughly, but do not forget the good God who gives you richly all things to enjoy.

We often think and speak of our happy visit to D—, and wonder if we are ever to see you here.

Ever yours affectionately,

Happy are they who have an Almighty Saviour.

Dublin, N., 16/2/84.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I came over here more than two weeks ago to preach in Merrion Hall, and elsewhere in Dublin. Through mercy I am very well in health and greatly enjoy my work for the Lord. In some meetings indeed I feel barren enough ; others are more refreshing. I suppose I receive the discipline that I need, in this way among others. Yet I am often much exercised that anything in my heart

should make it needful for Christ to refuse to make me a channel of blessing to others. Who can understand his errors? As we get on in life we learn more and more how close some faults lie hid in our hearts, and how hard it is to detect them, and own them, and get them conquered.

Nevertheless let us not be discouraged. We have not to cure them. We are the happy people who have an Almighty Saviour. We know *why* He was called JESUS, so let us cry to Him to search us. And then let us sing and believe the 103rd Psalm—"Who forgiveth all our iniquities, and *healeth* all our diseases."

May the Lord give you all needful blessing for time and Eternity! I am glad to hear of any encouragement you have in the number attending or the state of the meeting. Pray much in true faith, and you are sure to reap much.

Yours affectionately in Him,

Simplicity in prayer.

London, N., 8/4/84.

MY DEAR —,

"As many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal. iii. 27). So as little as possible of *M*— must now be seen, and as much as possible of Jesus Christ. Do you say this is difficult? Yes, if you try to do it as unconverted men try to keep the ten commandments. But if you do it as Moses divided the Red Sea—not a very easy task one would say—if you do it *by faith*, if you bring in God's power to do it, instead of using your own, it will not be difficult; it will be easy.

The Holy Spirit has come to dwell in believers to make it easy. Do not put your own strength to it, then, but reckon on Him.

When you see any bit of bad M—— S——, of M—— S—— in the flesh, own it to God, seek forgiveness, and ask God to help you to keep it down. When you see anything in Christ that you have not got, and are not living out, ask God to work it in you, and *keep asking till He does*. Tell *everything* to God; never run away from Him; always run to Him, no matter how faulty or forgetful or foolish. He loves you perfectly; He gave His Son to die for you; He is sure to help you.

Speak to Him as if He heard every word you say; for He does. Do not make *speeches* about anything when you pray; that is not praying, but only looks like it. Tell the thing that is uppermost in your heart first, and then other things as they come; but only things that in your heart you care about. If you saw God, and had troubles in your mind, you know how you would explain them to Him. In other words, the great thing is to live near God and to be real with Him. Christ's work makes this easy. His blood puts away all your faults. And His appearing for you in heaven gives you confidence.

I write this hasty line, dear M——, to shew you how glad I am that you trust Jesus Christ and have openly confessed Him, and to give you a little help in the part of the journey that I travelled some twenty years ago.

The Lord bless you and keep you.

Your fast and loving friend.

Admiring God's handiwork.

Ballymena, 28/10/84.

MY DEAR E.,

Some people pretend to be so spiritual that they feel no admiration excited in their minds by the loveliest

scenery. I hope I shall always delight to look on these master-pieces of nature as coming from my heavenly Father's own hand. He would not have made them so beautiful and given us eyes to see them and taste to enjoy them, if He had not intended that they should give us pleasure. "HE is Himself lovelier." Yes, that is quite true; but I do not the less admire and love my friend because I look with pleasure on the pretty slippers or the exquisite painting her skilful hands have prepared for me. Nay, that they are her workmanship makes me value them all the more and love to look on them.

Lovingly,

It is good to have the heart established in grace.

Ballymena, 30/10/84.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I was very much concerned to hear of the trouble through which you had been passing. I trust the sorrow has brought you closer to God. I was much impressed with the order of the prayers in Psalm xxv, pointed out to me by a godly brother. Early in the Psalm we have, "Shew me Thy ways, O Lord; teach me Thy paths," and it is not till we reach verse 17, that we have, "Bring me out of my distresses." The psalmist's heart was so in harmony with God's, that he was much more anxious to learn God's way, than to be delivered from trouble.

I am trying with God's help to establish saints more *in grace*. I find only a very few rejoicing in the Lord as they might be; most seem to believe that they get pardon and peace at first by grace, as a pure unmerited gift from God; but that, after that, they are expected to go on well themselves, and when they fail to do so, they get legal,

and miserable, and discouraged. They get out of heart, and give way to wrong things, and have no strength to attempt right things. It is only in starts that they get communion restored, and catch glimpses of their Father's face. And yet, if they would only in their hearts believe it, they are *in Christ* all the time ; never under condemnation ; always under grace ; always loved with the same love as Christ. God intends us to have Christ for our life, *now, practically*, just as much as for our righteousness before the throne. There is not a sin which we see in ourselves which the blood of Christ does not cleanse, and no service is required of us for which He does not give us ample strength in Himself. How is it that saints go on groaning over their own few bad pennies, instead of rejoicing in the unsearchable riches they have in Christ ?

But I must stop. Grace, mercy and peace be with you and yours.

Your affectionately in Christ,

The infinite loveliness of the character of God.

Redhill, Surrey, 11/12/84.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I have been staying the night at a friend's house here, and before leaving this morning, you have come much into my mind, and I take a few minutes to write you a line or two of brotherly greeting.

If you go to the North of Ireland, may you be so taking in from Christ that out of your belly shall flow rivers of living water. I was glad to hear that the fellowship in D—— grows, in power I trust, as well as in numbers.

The Lord was very good to me in the North of Ireland during my late visit. But why say *there* ? Is He not

always good, and always equally good? He loves us every moment as much as when He gave His Son to die for us on the Cross. And if He loves us thus, then every moment He must be doing His very best for our good. No change in His dealings could improve them; so He is good in London also, and He is good, I know, in D——. Oh! the infinite loveliness of the character of God!

Yours in our Lord Jesus,

The true Christian's chiefest glory.

London, N., 15/1/85.

MY DEAR —,

I see you are still exercised with inward conflicts, and I am very glad you are; for though there is a deeper peace than you have reached yet, it is hardly ever reached except through conflict. Easy-going, self-satisfied people miss it. You remember, don't you, the land of Beulah in "the Pilgrim's Progress"? Well, the pilgrims could never have enjoyed its sweet air and drunk of the river of life that flowed there, or eaten of its fruits, or gained its foretastes of the country beyond the river, if they had not struggled up the hill Difficulty, and passed the lions, and fought the giants. I am not sure that I can do much to help you, for every one must fight his own battle, and it is the Lord only who can teach our hands to war and our fingers to fight (Ps. cxliv. 1). But it *will* help you to know that others have had the same struggles *and have got through them*. Perhaps too it may encourage you a bit if I mention one chief help that I got—the last memorable one out of many—and that stays by me every hour, I might almost say, every moment, of every day I live. It came through a very simple verse, one that I thought in

my foolishness I understood pretty well, but in which I found there were depths I had never dreamed of, not to say fathomed.

The verse I mean is : " Ye are not under the law, but under grace " (Rom. vi. 14). Very likely I have spoken to you of it before ; but your letter shows me that you need to ponder it more, and to know it more inwardly than you have yet done. All this inward searching after faith, and this groaning over your own deficiencies arises from your not yet grasping *perfect* grace, in all its extent and in all its glorious freeness. In yourself you are altogether evil and without strength. God expects nothing, *nothing*, NOTHING of you. Don't break your heart that you cannot find what is not there, and cannot render to Him what He does not ask ; He *gives everything*. When you find any defect, any fault, any inability, it is only what you ought to have expected, and your surprise and disappointment are only pride. It is God who must set you right. These are His opportunities for giving you help. You must learn to live *entirely* like one of your little children, by your dear Father's gifts and care, His forgiveness and help. *He*, HE is your salvation. He asks nothing ; He gives everything. He gave Christ for your sins ; He gives Christ as your life, by His Spirit dwelling in you. Be as free and as happy, and without any sort of care, as He wants you to be. If you carry *any* burden, if you fret yourself with *any* toil, you are a Sabbath-breaker. Cast *all* your burden on Him ; *all* your care ; *all* your way with all its variety and need ; ALL, ALL on Him.

But there, my dear —, it is, as I said, the Lord who must teach you by His Spirit all this in your own heart ; and I have no fear but He will. One thing I am very glad

of, that is, that you are not trying to satisfy your heart by glorying in a religious party or "the one body," or in a mode of worship, or in your outward separation, etc. After all, these are not *the* distinguishing marks of *the one family*; these are not the sources of the soul's sunshine and strength, valuable as they doubtless are in their own place. We need to know Christ better, deeper, in our very inmost heart. Wherever the High-Priest went of old, you know, He made music (Ex. xxviii. 31-35). When Christ is walking *in* us (you remember 2 Cor. vi. 16) what music fills our hearts! Music only less sweet than the harpers harping with their harps make above. Avoid sectarianism as you would poison; I see it always withers those who are infected with it. Do not be afraid to have for your one chief glory and delight that which godly, exercised so-called Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Baptists, not to speak of us poor, so-called "Open Brethren," have just as much as yourself—"Christ in you the hope of glory"

My love to you all,

In Him by grace,

The only cure for unbelief.

London, N., Undated.

MY DEAR —,

I suppose the secret of helping others is to believe for one's self. "*I believed; therefore have I spoken.*" This is the point in which I daily learn how terribly I am deficient. It is, I find, one of the hardest things in the world to discover how little faith one possesses. I break down in communion, have little or no power in prayer, speak to no purpose, murmur about this or that,

groan over the state of my heart, etc., and do not suspect, or will not own to myself, that the secret cause of all the mischief is *unbelief*—looking at men, looking at circumstances, at the state of my own heart, and forgetting to dwell on the state of *God's* heart; being cast down that I love Him so little, and forgetting to rejoice and leap for joy that He infinitely and unalterably loves me. *Heart occupation with the character of God is the only cure for unbelief*; it invariably brings joy and quiet strength into the heart. What a lovely, blessed Being God is! And He is our Father. Is that not everything in one? Your care for your dear afflicted boy tells me His care for me, and tells you His care for you. Multiply your care, as a mother, a million times, and add his father's multiplied another million, and it will still fall infinitely short of the care God has for you and for me. For, as the Son of the Bosom said, "Thou hast loved *them* as Thou hast loved *ME*."

Affectionately yours in Him,

That which is true of us must be made true in us.

Dublin. 6/3/85.

MY DEAR E.,

"What a roving life we have," you will be saying. Yes, but not on that account an unhappy life, nor I hope a fragmentary or useless one.

My chief desire this week has been to get the souls of believers made freer and happier in the Lord. Many of them have been taught a great deal about "standing in Christ"; but they have not been taught that the Holy Spirit has come to make that an experience in our hearts and a reality in our lives. They hold as a theory that our

old man was crucified with Christ : but they do not treat him as a thing crucified—they are not at all surprised to find him living and stirring and acting. They try to keep *commandments outwardly* and to imitate *Christ outwardly*, instead of having the law written by the Holy Ghost on their hearts, and having Christ in the very citadel of their hearts, ruling there and holding all enemies in stedfast subjection. There is great danger of a dread of what is called “perfectionism” hindering brethren from enjoying the practical deliverance from self and sin which the presence of the Holy Ghost in us is meant to secure. Some are a little afraid that I want Christians to be too free and too holy and too happy. The danger I think is all on the other side. We make far too little of Christ. With such a sacrifice, with such a Saviour, ever with us and *in* us, what manner of persons ought we to be? Is it humility to talk about our own weakness and foolishness, and yield to them and groan over them? Nay: *true* humility is to be sick of them and bury them and quit talking about them, and to speak of the power, the holiness, and the riches of Jesus Christ, our true strength and real life.

I got the two tracts you sent me, one by J. N. D. and the other by F. W. G. I have read Mr. D.'s with some care; Mr. G.'s is longer and rather duller reading. I have looked over it and mean to consider it more carefully. So far as I can see Mr. Darby is entirely opposed to Scripture. It is quite true, as I have been saying above, that a great many Christians are very deficient in the free, holy child-like spirit that the possession of the Holy Ghost ought to produce. But were the Corinthians not “carnal”; filled with party spirit; far from being as pure in their lives as they should have been? Does Paul say they were

not sealed with the Holy Spirit? Nay: "Now He who establisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also *sealed* us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts" (2 Cor. i. 21, 22). And again, "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you?" (1 Cor. vi. 19).

The Galatians were putting themselves under the law, going back from the place of children to that of servants. Does Paul account for it as Mr. Darby does, by supposing that they had not yet received the Holy Ghost? Nay: "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" (Gal. iii. 2).

I fear that many of those whom Mr. Darby speaks of as carnal Christians without the Holy Ghost, are not converted at all, for "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His" (Rom. viii. 9).

Supposing Mr. G. is wrong and Mr. D. right, to put him out of fellowship for such an error is something dreadful. Where have Christian love and forbearance and pitifulness gone to? Some men would cut up Christ's body (if it were possible) with as little shrinking as a butcher does the limbs of a dead sheep!

Christ Jesus, our dear Lord, will not think the worse of you for receiving and loving those whom He receives and loves.

Ever yours in Him,

Grace, goodness, and glory.

London, N., 30/4/85.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—

It seems a very long time since I last wrote to you. It is not that I have forgotten, very far from that; but I am in my 60th year. Work seems to grow on me, chiefly

in these four shapes: (1) I enjoy my Bible more, and spend more time in searching it than I used to do; (2) I have more visiting among the 600 and over in fellowship in this meeting; (3) I have more invitations to preach, so that it is very rarely I have an evening without a meeting; and (4) I have letter-writing.

I am writing in perfect simplicity, and hope you will not think I am making a display of work. Many really energetic, hardworking servants of Christ would be ashamed of the poor total of the work I am able to do. But hogsheads hold more than pint pots; and a pint pot like me can only hold its "full." Pardon me for wasting time and paper in this long explanation.

I trust you are advancing in the knowledge and enjoyment of grace. Without being willing to own it, indeed without in the least suspecting it, you used to be dreadfully legal. I mean you *tried* and *struggled* and *laboured*, and got out of heart because you failed. I hope you have learned that *trusting* is better than *trying*. If you have NO strength, what is the use of trying? By faith let us bring GOD in; and then the thing will surely be done.

I do not need to own how much I have done at this same *trying*, and then at the *growling* that follows when the failure comes, as it always does. You know it all nearly as well as I do. But through God's mercy I have learned the way of faith a little better, and am very much happier than I used to be. It is long since I have known a dark day or a dark hour. Why should one know darkness who has an Almighty God for his Father? And that Father always with him, and always engaged to give all the help His child can need?

I say this because when one finds the secret of increased freedom and joy, he likes to see those he loves sharing it.

And we shall soon be in heaven, soon see the face that was marred for us ; and what shall we say then ? I suppose *His* will be the first face you will see. And though I shall be there it will be long before you take your eyes off *His* face to look at mine ; and I, for my part, will be too busy with *His* to notice others. Even so, come Lord Jesus !

Yours affectionately in Him,

We are bankrupts and paupers to the last.

London, N., 23/6/85.

BELOVED BROTHER IN OUR LORD.

I was in my very heart thankful to see your handwriting once more. I greatly desired to write to you sooner, but have been compelled to put it off. My head has been suffering from what I suppose at least is a little overstraining. I have not been entirely laid aside. Engagements that I had made I have, sometimes in a very poor way, tried to fulfil, and perhaps on the whole it has been best for me that I had this effort to make ; but it was all that I could well do.

As is generally the case, I had a battle to fight inside for the ground where God has put us ; and it has been sometimes as much as I could do to maintain it. Still it *has been* maintained, thanks to a faithful God, and it *will be*, in spite of every enemy, to the end ; for He abideth faithful. "Yea, he shall be holden up, for God is able to make him stand." This [feebleness] has disarranged my correspondence and kept me from all sorts of head-work that I could avoid. But I am gradually getting better and stronger, and the mists are clearing away, and the giants are not so dreadful-looking, and the Man with the

drawn sword in His hand appears strong enough to overcome them all a hundred times over.

We walk *by faith* ; *by faith* ye stand ; the just shall live *by faith* ; these all died *in faith*. We shall not get further till we get to glory. A clear sight of Christ sometimes makes us secretly imagine that *we* are grown good and strong. "Thou hidest Thy face"—and we both know that what the psalm says is what follows :—

"Then quickly is our prosperous state
Turned into misery."

Our comfort and strength did *not* come, as we almost thought, from any change in *us*. The mill-wheel, when the water is off, after grinding tons, has no power to grind an ounce. We are bankrupts and paupers to the last ; Christ keeps the purse ; we must be indebted to Him for every sovereign and for every farthing. The Lord make us content to go on with Him on these terms. The little shepherd-boy sings * in this pleasant valley ; I suppose it is pride that stumbles in it and meets Apollyon.

I am called away, so farewell. *Please* write me soon and tell me how you get on in all respects. If it would be of any service to you to come over here and stay a while with us, how delighted we would be ! Do you think it would ? You could go about and do nothing as busily as ever you liked.

My love to Mrs. — and A—.

Yours ever in *Him*,

* "He that is down needs fear no fall ;
He that is low, no pride :
He that is humble ever shall
Have God to be his guide."

The superlatives of Christianity.

Kingussie, 20/9/85.

MY DEAR —,

We had some interesting Scriptures at our meeting together this morning—some superlatives that God has used to stir up our attention to the great things He has done for us. (1) 2 Cor. ix. 15, “His *unspeakable* gift.” (2) Eph. iii. 8, “The *unsearchable* riches of Christ.” Mark there also Paul’s wonderful word of himself, “Less than the least of all saints.” (3) Eph. iii. 19, “To *know* the love of Christ, which *passeth knowledge*.” (4) Rom viii. 36, “Groanings which *cannot be uttered*.” (5) 1 Pet. i. 8, “Joy *unspeakable* and full of glory.” (6) Phil. iv. 7, “The peace of God which *passeth all understanding*.”

These are some of our verses, and surely they suggest much food for thought, and as they are thought over, call forth much praise and worship.

Yours ever in Him,

The blessing of an exercised heart.

London, N., 15/12/86.

DEAR E.,

The true comfort in bereavement, after all, is found in God. “Everyone knows that.” Quite true; and yet how few find and enjoy the comfort! Like a large crowd, all knowing that there is plenty of water in a springing well close beside them, and yet only half a dozen of them have water in their cups.

I have no doubt that I have told you in some of my letters of the help I have often got by sitting quietly down in my room for half an hour, and calming my heart, as

deep down as I could, to think about God ; that I am here, and God is here ; I, sinful, helpless, full of faults and instabilities, needy to the core of my being, and that every moment of my life : GOD, the maker and upholder of the universe, who knows me, knows every shade and corner of me, who loves me, who sent His Son to save me, who put all my sins on Him when He hung on the cross, and thus set me free. I try to go on in this way, dwelling in my heart on all I know of His character : then, perhaps, turn to any promises I remember and that I specially need, and reflect on their meaning, on what they bind God to, and on the infinite certainty that He will perform them. If my sins and weaknesses come up and seek to occupy my thoughts, I refuse to let them. I say to myself : " All those sins have been met ; Christ died for them ; grace is for the *unworthy*, and for those who have *no* strength ; therefore my failings of all sorts only entitle me the more to the riches of grace." *And so I turn my heart back to dwell on the lovely character of God.*

If there is sunshine anywhere it is *here* : and there is abundance of it, as I can thankfully testify by my own experience, not once nor twice, nor a thousand odd times ; but steadily.

I trust you also, dear E., are finding the way into this abiding sunshine of the divine countenance. It is for this end He has been sending you such sharp discipline of late, that you may find rest and satisfaction in Himself ; not merely that you might hold the orthodox theory that it is there, but that you may *have* it, and so be able, *even beside the bitter waters*, to sing that you have GOD there, and that you are satisfied with Him.

If my asking you such a question leads you to condemn yourself, if you feel your lack in this matter, do not be in

the least discouraged. Does God expect anything from one who has nothing?—expect exploits from one who, He tells her, has no strength? Is God a hard man, reaping where he has not sown? No: *in the new creation everything is the gift of God.* The discovery of a defect is your opportunity to ask Him for a full supply, and His opportunity to grant it. If we were as dead as Lazarus, what matter? Christ is beside us to give us life. Blessed helplessness that obtains for us such a Saviour! Let it not be “I,” “I,” “I,” but “He,” “He,” “HE,” and all will go well.

Ever affectionately yours,

How to be at home everywhere.

London, N., Undated.

MY DEAR E.,

I find that the presence of God is the secret of being at home and happy everywhere, and I hope you are living every day, and all day long, in the sunshine of His love. Whether we enjoy it or not, the love is always there, and it is always the same; it springs from no good thing in us; it is diminished by no faults; our good state of soul does not make it greater; our bad state of soul does not make it less; our sin, our weakness, our forgetfulness, our unbelief, our need of every sort, only furnish fresh occasions for us to trust Him and for Him to help us.

I often think that *grace* is the thing in all the world that is least understood; very few Christians even seem to know much about it. Speaking for myself, there is nothing I have been so slow in learning; pride and untruthfulness of heart have been my chief hindrances. When I have not been trusting God I have found it hard work to say

quietly in my heart, before God, that *I have not* been trusting Him. When I am actually doing my own will and not God's, my heart hates to be forced to tell the truth ; it will aim at pleasing and exalting self, and yet—(unless I am very sharp in questioning it, and forcing it to tell the truth)—it will say that it exceedingly wishes God's name to be glorified. I am only beginning to learn what a vile and shameful liar it is ; and I am the more set on learning it fully because I am finding out that all these lies are robbing me of blessing. It is need and need *alone* that obtains God's favours, and here is this abominable heart of mine unwilling to own the very need that gets the blessing ! The false traitor and deceiver ! Thank God, I am beginning to understand it and keep my eyes on it more carefully ; I find that the moment any need is honestly owned to God nothing more is required. That was the only thing God was waiting for. He does not expect a particle of faith, or love, or gratitude, or zeal, or holiness of any kind from us. *But He desires "truth in the inward parts"* (Ps. li. 6). He expects us to own the lack of these things when they are absent, and to expect them from Him ; that is all. Blessed God, how generous and free Thy grace is ! It has cost me a hundred times more tears than either sorrow or sin ; it is marvellous. Only think that we have nothing to do, that God *undertakes to do everything* ! He quickens, He restores, He keeps. We have only to expect Him to keep His promises. Only think : Jehovah, He who made heaven and earth, and owns and rules them, is *our Father, actually and literally our Father* ! Only think, the Son of that living God died to put our sins away and is our living Saviour ! Only think, the Holy Spirit of God dwells in us, and seals us to the day of redemption ! Only think, nothing can

ever separate us from His love ! Trials come and trials go, but this flows on for ever. Is it not a wonder that we can have a gloomy hour, and that we are not singing the whole day long ?

Very affectionately,

Christ must be the centre of our thoughts.

London, N., 9/3/87.

MY DEAR R.,

What a scene of trial of various kinds this life is ! Faith, however, changes the nature of the trial. In place of sorrow being a trial of *our* strength, faith makes it an occasion of trying *God's* strength and faithfulness. It is not, "How well can I bear it ?" but, "How well can God sustain me under it ?" I trust you have been finding how true His Word is, "When thou passest through the waters, *I will be with thee.*" His presence can turn the darkest night into day and change mourning into singing.

God continues to give us blessing here. There are nearly 700 in communion—more than can be well looked after. We go on unitedly and happily. Failures and faults no doubt there are, but with a thousand causes for thankfulness to God. I preach the Gospel on Lord's-days, when the hall is full to the doors. Last Sunday evening I had "the good Samaritan" for the subject, and found it sweet to bring out the grace it is filled with. On Friday evenings I am expounding the first Epistle to the Corinthians, and last Friday I attempted the opening up of the first half of chap. iv. I learn to admire and love Paul exceedingly.

Last night I had nearly twenty young men here for

tea. They manifest an evident longing for the deepening of their spiritual life, the increase of their knowledge of God, and of their communion and usefulness. We had a most happy time together. I was trying to teach them to get the "I" taken away from the beginning of their sentences, and "HE" substituted for it; talking not of what "I" have to do, or purpose to do, but of what "He" has promised to do and is going to do.

Ever affectionately,

Cleaving to God is our only wisdom.

Kingussie, N.B., 26/9/85.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

Since last writing to you I have been a good deal tossed about as to health of body and experience of soul, as well as places of residence and service.

It would be tedious to give any account of them. One thing only remains as wheat, after sifting out all the chaff, namely, that though in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing, yet the Lord Jesus is *the same*, yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. I find that it requires no effort to depart from God, and that it needs much watchfulness to cleave to Him; I find, too, that cleaving to Him is my only wisdom, and that He is worth all other friends, and all other things, a thousand times over.

I purpose (D.V.) crossing to Ireland for a few weeks; pray for me that I may take the sweet savour of Christ with me.

Yours affectionately in our Lord Jesus,

Wherever He is, there is sunshine and rest for the heart.

Carlisle, 6/11/85.

MY DEAR ———,

I see no wise or right way of altering things at present, and God's will cannot but be best; therefore accept it patiently and cheerfully. He can make solitude happy with His presence and society, and in His own time He may make things different. Blessed are all they that wait for *Him*

In the evening I held a meeting in the lecture room, and spoke from the Lord's prayer; truly the Lord was with us and made us feel it.

We reached this city about 1 o'clock, and had another meeting. It was unexpectedly large, and I do not know when I enjoyed speaking the Word of the Lord more. There is to be another meeting to-night: may *His* presence be felt again among us!

On Wednesday we hope to leave for London. I do not look forward to going back there with any very great enthusiasm; but the Lord is there also, and wherever *HE* is, there is sunshine and rest for the heart. There is plenty of work, and He is there to help in it. Kindest love.

God demands supremacy.

London, N., 21/12/85.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

My time in Ireland was particularly busy and pleasant. I wish God's children there were more full of life, and that His work was advancing more rapidly; but I was thankful for the measure of life and progress I found.

Do you remember a saying that our brother Mr. Groves quoted from Ruskin on the Friday morning in Glasgow? It went deep into my heart. He said that God would pardon many things, and allow many things; but there was one thing God never would allow, and that was *a second place for Himself*. Do you believe that God has the first place in your heart every moment? Yet God commands it. Does He command what is impossible? Does He command what He does not give us power to fulfil? Can the indwelling Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, not enable us to give God constantly His *true* place, which certainly is the first place in our hearts? If not, what gain is there in having the Holy Spirit?

I rejoice that there is some healing in the matter of which you wrote. Be sure and get *Jehovah Rophi* to heal it, and then it will be done tenderly and effectually. Our kindest regards and good wishes.

Reviewing the past in the communion of the Holy Ghost.

London, N., 17/3/86.

MY DEAR —,

Thank you very heartily for your kind remembrance of my birthday. For sixty years God has shewn me very much mercy: and by no means the smallest part of that mercy is the kindness and love of so many dear friends.

You may suppose what thoughts about the past occupied my mind on Monday. Few here know as you do through what trials of God's faithfulness I have been led; but you do not know, nor does anyone living, but God, the exceeding imperfections and unprofitableness in spite

of which His goodness has flowed on undiminished, nay, increasing.

Two things a quiet, careful review of one's life—if the Holy Spirit is reviewing it with us—is sure to strengthen ; I mean, humility and faith in God. One cannot but hope that their increase will make one's future path more glorifying to God.

Yours lovingly,

If men be not turned, we preach in vain.

London, N., 3/8/86.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I trust you keep well and that your soul prospers. Slates off and panes broken would tell ill for the builder who had undertaken to care for a house. The Lord make us His faithful witnesses, "shewing forth His salvation from day to day !"

Last month I preached in a number of places in and near London ; this month I preach again in Clapton Hall. "The Kingdom of God is not in word but in power." Paul was not sent simply to preach, but "to turn men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God"—this is what his preaching was to accomplish. Alas, this talk, talk, that seems to do nothing ! When will God make His arm bare ?

Yours affectionately in our Lord Jesus,

Faith and patience inherit the promises.

Birnam, N.B., 27/9/86.

MY DEAR ———,

If I could give you wise and sure counsel how gladly I would give it ! Only One can, of whom I know you have sought it. At His door *keep* knocking and asking ; for “EVERY ONE that asketh receiveth”—only we have sometimes a good while to wait. You remember the 40th psalm in rhyme ?

“I waited long and sought the Lord,
And patiently did bear,
At length to me He did incline,
My voice and cry to hear.”

Facts are facts, and are stubborn things, and you must accept them as part of God's wise and loving guiding, not to be quarrelled with. Whatever you decide to do I will try and help you as far as I can, and not the least help will be to endeavour, in union with yourself, to keep your case before the face of God our Father. He is very pitiful and of tender mercy.

All of us unite in love.

Let us not dictate to God in prayer.

Stoke Newington, 9/11/86.

MY DEAR BROTHER IN THE LORD JESUS,

I cannot tell you how thankful and relieved I felt this morning when your letter reached me. I have been keeping your affairs in my heart before God, and, since Nov. 1 especially, have been quite burdened with a desire to know how He was answering. Yes, He is indeed a faithful God. It is not possible for Him not to hear

prayer; only He will answer in His own time and way, and our wills must not dictate to His, but be *bent*. May He guide all through!

Lately, in a striking manner, the hand of God was stretched out to help another friend of mine in a matter of property, also in answer to much prayer.

This very morning a large and costly Bagster's Bible that had been stolen from me at a railway station *some years ago*, and for which I had prayed a score of times, and even lately, was in quite a remarkable way brought back to me. And yet another answer to prayer, almost as remarkable, has this morning been calling out praise from my heart to God.

But neither of them has moved me so much as this dawn in the darkness of your affairs. Praise the Lord, for He is good!

My much love in the Lord Jesus to both Mrs. — and yourself.

Poor in purse—rich in faith.

London, N.. 27/11/86.

MY DEAR —,

Please accept the enclosed for yourself. I was poor in pocket when I saw you, though rich in faith, and am richer in purse now, and very glad to be able to give you this little help.

Through mercy I am fairly well, but overdone with preaching, visiting, travelling, writing, etc.; but a day or two's rest, as soon as I can get it, will set me all right again.

Did Mary tell you of my getting back my large Bible which I lost five years ago and prayed so often about?

It was returned without a stain or injury of any sort !

She and I saw a man cut to pieces on the railway two weeks ago ; we could hardly sleep all night, and have never forgotten it since. Being the worse for drink, he fell right in front of the engine, and could not escape. We were standing just over him. What an awful word for him is, "*After death the judgment*" !

Our united love,

Yours affectionately,

Trusting God in difficult places.

London. N., 1/3/87.

MY DEAR —,

I received your two letters with many varying thoughts in my heart. My first were those of the deepest concern, especially when your second letter came. I took in the whole of your situation, and, as it appears to the natural eye, nothing could be gloomier. But then I began to reflect—Is it true and right to look forward to the future earthly course of a Christian, *and leave out God* ?

The 121st Psalm occurred to me. If I look up to the hills and scan the whole horizon to find refuge or help, I scan it in vain. "From whence cometh my help ?" I can see none anywhere, I must look higher. "My help cometh from the Lord, that made heaven and earth." The whole psalm, as you know, is beautiful and full of help.

Then I thought of Matt. vi., "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things **SHALL BE** added unto you." I have very often in the frequent trials of my own life experienced the truth of that promise and I knew it would not fail you.

Then I began to think of all the line of saints whose histories have been preserved to us in the pages of Scripture, and that the great majority of them were men greatly tried. Abraham. Joseph, Moses, Elijah. Daniel, Jeremiah and Paul, and *our blessed Lord Jesus*. Their trials led, nay, compelled them to try the faithfulness and love and power of God, and they did not try Him in vain. Their usefulness to the church ever since has lain in the very fact that they *were* greatly tried. Had they been well off and surrounded with all sorts of comforts they would not have been of the least use to us.

Thus I saw the special honour God was putting on you and dear Mrs. —, in trusting you in a very difficult place to trust *Him*; and He is not going to leave or forsake you.

In much haste and with much love to both,

Christ disowns a sectarian position.

London, N., 21/10/87.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

Another word or two on this question of "receiving." Is not the case you suppose—of a person coming from Corinth to Rome, not in fellowship with the right assembly of Christians there, but in acknowledged fellowship with Christ—precisely met by Mark ix. 38-40? It is of "receiving" that the Lord is speaking in verse 37. The man of whom John speaks in verse 38 did not follow *with them*; he was not in the right assembly; but he was in fellowship with Christ, and was casting out devils in His Name. Was his relation to *them*, or his relation to *Christ*, to determine the question of their treatment of him? Christ settles it beyond a doubt in verses 39 and

40. Is he working "in *My* name"? and with power? Does he think rightly of *Me*? Then he is "*on our part*"; he must not be forbidden or disowned, but acknowledged as belonging to *us*. Christ disowns all assumptions. Sectarian position and teaching I fear have grieved the Holy Spirit, and robbed "Brethren" of much of their old unction and power. If we cease to own the one *true* Body in all its brokenness, the only justification of our meetings is gone, and the one scriptural and tenable ground—the ground taken by "Brethren" in their most spiritual days—is taken from us. We should thus become simply another among the many existing denominations, distinguished by a little clearer light about the order of worship, a good deal less on some hardly less important subjects, and a great deal of boasting and hard speaking about our brethren.

After our visits to the Highlands in September, I had the advantage of attending "the Fast-Day Meetings" in Glasgow. I think they were hardly as large as I have seen them; still they were large, and, in the judgment of many who expressed their opinion to me, unusually spiritual and profitable. No truth was shirked; but not a sentence tinged with sectarian feeling, or smelling of a particular ecclesiastical school, was uttered from the platform that I remember. Saints were fed on the flesh and blood of Christ. His person and work, His return, our relation to Him, the one Body, etc., were the staple of the teaching.

Here we are waiting for the fast approaching close of our brother J. Denham Smith's life and ministry. The doctors give no hope of his recovery. Dear William Lincoln also is fading away. A few Lord's-days since he told the people in Beresford they had heard his voice

for the last time. How fast useful men are being removed ! How few *eminent* saints (I do not mean aspiring) are coming forward ! Nevertheless, Jesus our Lord lives, and has received and *gives* gifts to men—all the gifts necessary “for the perfecting of the saints.”

Yours affectionately in our Lord Jesus,

The best birth-day wish.

28/10/87.

MY DEAR ———,

I opened my memorandum book about 1 o'clock last night and saw that it was your birth-day. I felt so sorry that I had not observed it sooner, that I might have sent you my congratulations and good wishes in time. Late as I am, let me present them now. The Lord has been very good to you from your birth to this day. He has been good in the parents He has given you, in your comfortable and happy home, in your health, in your education, in providing for you, in your friends, in your acquaintance with God's Word, and, above all, in giving you heart knowledge of Himself as your Father, and of Jesus Christ as your Saviour.

I cannot express a better wish for you than that you may experience daily in the future the fulfilment of the Scripture, “The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.” Bright and happy to-day ; brighter and happier to-morrow ; free from self to-day ; freer to-morrow. Close to God, our Father, to-day ; closer to-morrow ; and so day after day till the day without clouds and without a night.

I trust you began your new year happily yesterday, and also that you and your dear father and mother and

grandmother are keeping well through this rather trying weather.

An old friend of mine,* over eighty, went to a meeting in the evening of this day week in his usual health ; he gave out the hymn—

“Just as Thou art, how wondrous fair,
Lord Jesus, all Thy members are !”

helped to sing it, and left with others to catch a train as they were singing,

“Soon, soon, midst joys on joys untold,
Thou wilt this grace and love unfold.”

He walked between two brethren to the railway station near, sat down on the seat for a few minutes and talked with his friends ; his head sank on his shoulder, and in a moment, without a pain or a sigh, he went to heaven. He had lived for sixty years a bright and useful life as a Christian, succouring many. He “walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.” Christians from all parts of London gathered to his funeral to shew their respect for him. Could you mark out for yourself a happier life or a happier death ?

Tell your father I was at W—— yesterday at the opening meetings in the hall, for the enlargement of which he recently sent some help ; they were large and very good. I preached in it last Lord’s-day evening to about 1,000 persons, who listened earnestly to the gospel from the old story of the prodigal son. I know no place in or about London where there is more life or blessing.

Our united love and good wishes,

* Mr. Lynn, of Beresford Chapel, Walworth, remembered by many for his fragrant, godly life. Ed.

Our trust is in the God of resurrection.

London, N., 14/3/88.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

What you told me gives me much concern. "God is our refuge"; may He guide and help! "*I wrought for my name's sake*" is a comfort. He is jealous for His holy name, and in such a case it is our only plea. Indeed in most cases what other plea have we? And what better could we ever have? "*What wilt Thou do for Thy great name?*" got great help for Israel in Joshua's time; and He is the same still. May He save His name from reproach *now as then!*

I was glad to hear from — that you had been with him, and that — joined you there for a day or two, and that you had a good time together in prayer and supplication to God. There is far too little prayer among Christians at present, else there would be more power among us, and more blessing of every sort. "Yet will I be enquired at of the house of Israel to do these things for them," is still the condition of our receiving promised blessings from God.

Through mercy I am in very good health for a man who will finish his 62nd year to-morrow. I am preaching the Gospel on the Lord's-day evenings of this month in the large Conference Hall in Mildmay, and ministering the Word in various places in and around London during the week.

What a comfort that our Lord Jesus is alive at the right hand of God! Death in us and around us need not dismay us. Our God is the God of resurrection; His killing is only the necessary preparation for His making alive. He who wishes the one must submit to the other.

Yours affectionately in Him,

God's comfort in the vale of tears.

London, N., 8/5/88.

MY DEAR FRIEND.

I could not tell you the sorrow of heart caused me by the news that W—— has been called away. I hoped it might please God to preserve him after all ; but it has seemed good to Him otherwise.

With the sorrow, however, is mixed the joy of knowing that he is gone to be with the Lord. I am *very* thankful to God for the clear testimony he gave that in his heart he was trusting the Lord Jesus as his Saviour. That is an inexpressible comfort to you and to his dear mother. It is a very great trial of faith to both of you to be parted all the rest of your lives from your dear boy ; and only God and your own hearts know what it means. But you have put *all* things *unreservedly* into God's hands, and you will not murmur or distrust Him now. There is not a verse in the Bible that forbids tears ; but submission and confidence in God can be deep in the heart while tears are on the cheek.

May He who comforts those who are cast down, comfort you ! The separation is not for ever. What is the interval between this and the resurrection ? God's estimate must be correct, and He calls it " a little, little while." Keep your eyes on that moment when Christ shall return " with *all* His saints," and your heart resting on the word " a little, little while," and light and comfort will daily increase.

With true sympathy,

Yours affectionately in our Lord Jesus,

The Bride is making herself ready for the marriage of the Lamb.

London, N., 11/6/88.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

Many thanks for your kind letters, and still more for your remembrance of me in prayer. The Lord abundantly repay you in blessing on your own soul and work.

You ask what sort of meetings we had at the conference. I can truly say they were the very best I have been present at for many years. I do not remember ever seeing so many happy faces at the end of any series of meetings. Mr. Alex. Stewart, of Glasgow, helped us greatly. Since then I have been at similar meetings in Dublin, which also were very good. I think they were the best they have had for years.

In both sets of meetings I was very glad of the prominence given to the work of the Holy Ghost—not to the setting aside of the Hope of the Church, the coming of our blessed Lord Jesus, but greatly to the strengthening of it. For as the dressmaker who is to prepare the bride for the wedding presses on with the adorning as she knows the bridegroom's coming approaches, so surely the best and truest sign of the approach of Christ's coming is the increase and deepening of spiritual life in the Church by the Holy Ghost. I trust the secret waiting on God of which you speak has preceded and accompanied, and will follow these public gatherings.

Through mercy my wife and I are both very well, and full of the goodness of the Lord; I cannot express how satisfied and happy He makes and keeps my soul.

Yours affectionately in our Lord Jesus,

If God leads us, we lead others.

London, N., 16/8/88.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

Above all I trust your soul prospers and is in health. I suppose the chief sign of a prosperous soul is that it is strong in faith, giving glory to God ; and the faith that marks true soul-prosperity is a faith that works by love, and purifies the heart.

Through mercy I keep in fairly good health. I think if my soul was in as good health as it ought to be, I would have more courage to witness for Christ, and more success in winning souls for Him. These are two points on which I pray much. But possibly it may be with me as with Joshua, when God asked him why he lay on his face and kept crying to Him. His place was to get up and go forward, and take Israel forward with him. But the doing of this also is from God. I fully believe all originates with God Himself. We must concur with Him, but our very concurring with Him springs from His sovereign and undeserved grace.

Yours affectionately in Him,

Seeking happiness in God Himself.

Sandgate, 6/8/89.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

We are all here together, with the ever-changing sea before us ; and France, of which in clear days we can see a little, beyond it ; and we are having a very happy time together. God is with us. We are enjoying the sea, and the pretty place, and the rest, and one another's company ; but we are honestly seeking to find our

happiness not in these, but in God Himself; and we are not seeking in vain.

For where is there such a Being as God—almighty, and so tender, true, faithful, generous and unchanging? His very nature is *Love*, and the gift of His Son tells, more than a thousand tongues could tell in a thousand years, all His infinite excellence. Oh what a blessing to live with a Being such as this! What an unutterable blessing to know Him as our Father!

Yours affectionately,

Get close to God and talk all over with Him.

London, N., 29/10/89.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

Thank you very much for your brief account of the G—— meetings. The application of certain Old Testament incidents to our present circumstances is a delicate matter, and needs careful handling. Sometimes men make them mean what they themselves believe and think, and fancy that they are drawing their teaching from the Scriptures. The next speaker may see something different in them. Surely there are plain Scriptures enough to shew us our path, without turning the Bible into a book of riddles, and leaving us to be dependent on the cleverest guesser.

I hope your health keeps good and that your soul keeps happy. I find *faith* the one remedy for all trouble. Get close to God, and talk it all over with Him, and believe what He says to us in His Word. Half-faith never helps much. We need to take God's Word down deep into our hearts, and rely on it with the same sureness as on God's existence or our own. It is a dreadful thing to have a

doubt, or a shadow of a doubt, of God's truth in any corner of our heart.

Ever yours affectionately in Christ Jesus,

Death is abolished for the believer.

London, N., 21/12/89.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I would have written you before this and communicated the sorrowful news about Mr. Morris; but since it was generally known, the stream of visitors and letters has been incessant, and I have hardly had any leisure.

Dear Morris died on the 19th of Oct., near Bailundu, on the way to Bihé, of fever, and Gall four hours after him. What a night that was to poor Mrs. Morris, and to our beloved Fred. Arnot, and indeed to all the missionary party! But He who is the Resurrection and the Life was with them, and they knew, even when they saw death before their eyes, that death was abolished.

It is well we have learned God's perfect love at the Cross. Even if we are as sheep for the slaughter, what we have learned there makes us more than conquerors through Him that loved us.

I am writing in bed with a badly hurt knee. I am afraid it will be some days before I shall be able to move much; otherwise I am well. Possibly God has taken this way of giving me needed quiet.

Yours affectionately in Christ,

Even through tears we bless His name.

London, N., 8/1/90.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I have heard that it has pleased God to take your dear wife away from you to be with Himself. Let me assure you of my sincere sympathy with you in this bereavement. With all her frail health and varied infirmities for many years, I know you will greatly miss her out of her old corner, and feel very lonely when you go into the kitchen and don't find her there.

You have had many trials, and when I think over them my heart shares your sorrow ; but you know who reigns. I do not need to defend God to you ; I know you do not accuse Him, nor listen to Satan doing so. You have, and use, the shield that protects you from his fiery darts ; that shield is faith—a steadfast confidence in God's perfect love. You learned that confidence at the Cross, where you saw God, out of love for you, giving up His Son to die for your sins.

No distresses, or troubles, or losses, or deaths, can, for long at least, shake that confidence. In all these things we are more than conquerors. After such a proof of His love as God has given, it would be base, shameful, cruel to allow any doubt or suspicion of that love to lodge in our hearts. I know you do not allow it, dear brother. Even through tears you bless His name, and say, " Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him."

Let me recommend you to meditate often on *the resurrection of our Lord Jesus*. There is no fact in all history more surely proved (see 1 Cor. xv. 4-8). And what a difference it makes in almost all things, but especially in the separations caused by death. Your dear wife,

your M——, your W——, have only fallen asleep. We know that is all that death is, now that Jesus is risen. The reunion in "a little while" is as sure as the separation. *Meditate* often in your heart on this fruitful subject, or you will not get the deep, full comfort it gives.

My wife joins me in loving sympathy. We too have had our sorrows of late, and we have been held up and comforted.

Yours affectionately in Christ,

Taking all things as from God.

Ballater, 19/8/90.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

Through God's mercy I am better, and hope soon to be as well as I am ever likely to be till I hear with infinite, thankful joy the archangel's voice, and this mortal puts on immortality. How glad I would be if it were to-day!

Thank you for telling me of the circumstances in ——. We are slow to accept things as from God when they are painful to us, and cross our wishes and plans, especially when they come through the perversity of other people, as we judge. Job found the trial that came through his cruel, hard-judging friends worse to bear than the desolation caused by tempest, disease, etc.

Mr. Chapman said a fine thing the other day in Glasgow: that a Christian knew no such word as *dis-appointment*, and that he himself spelled it with an "H"—His appointment.

Yours affectionately in Christ,

God does keep.

London, N., 3/12/90.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I feel years telling on me, and sometimes am so weighed down that I am glad to keep out of sight and be quiet. My worst trouble is an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God, against which my poor watching is, alas ! unavailing. "Except the Lord keep the city the watchman waketh but in vain." But He *does* keep ; He restoreth my soul. Clear shining after rain is very pleasant. "When my weakness leaneth on His might, all seems bright." There is no weakness, no evil tendency, no sin of any sort in us, for which God's grace has not made provision. "GRACE REIGNS through righteousness unto eternal life."

Yours affectionately in Him,

Faith and love make service a delight.

London, N., 19/1/91.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I trust that you keep in the warm sunshine of God's perfect love. Through God's mercy I am well, and hardly remember being more busily or happily occupied in the service of the best of Masters. I am learning more and more the need of having the heart right with God. A heart filled with faith and love finds service easy and delightful.

I wish I could speak of fruit in conversions ; but these are few. My eyes are up to God "who quickeneth the dead." Oh that He would rend the heavens and come down ! Yet, though I write this *as if* I longed for it,

it is probably the want of *real* longing and expectation that hinders. Is God not ready to save?

Yours affectionately in Christ,

We know Him too well to draw back now.

London, N., 15/1/91.

MY DEAR SISTER IN OUR LORD JESUS,

I ought much sooner to have written to thank you for the beautiful photograph of Davos, with its charming setting of Edelweiss, which you and your precious husband sent me at Christmas time. Accept my hearty thanks for it.

I suppose before this Mr. —— has gone away on his long journey to M——, and you have been called to pass through the fresh sorrow of separation from him. What can we say? “Not my will, but Thine be done.” When we came to God and trusted Him He did not promise us an easy life, free from cares and sorrow. For our part we put ourselves unreservedly into His hands. We made no bargains; but *trusted*; He was to choose, not we; and come what may, we are not going to draw back. We know Him too well. He who gave His Son for us will never injure us, nor suffer anyone, or anything, to do us any harm. Perfect love, *His* perfect love, casts out fear. So I trust you are helped, in perfect peace, to keep your mind stayed on Him, leaving all issues to His disposal.

If it please God to strengthen and preserve you, and to keep him, as I hope and trust He may, the time of separation will soon be over. And His presence will keep you from being lonely. No doubt He will find you work for Him to interest and occupy you as He did before.

Farewell. The good Lord, who has so often helped

and kept you, watch over you daily and hourly, and over your dear husband also.

Yours in Him,

The way to help souls.

London, N., 20/1/91.

MY DEAR ———,

How does your class get on? Expect much from God; not much from them. Helping souls is deeply interesting work, but often trying and not seldom disappointing; yet it is *never* fruitless. The word stands always true, "Your labour is not in vain in the Lord." I suppose the reason of apparent failure is that our labour is not always "*in the Lord*." HE is never defeated. When faith brings Him into the battle, victory is certain. Failure helps us; for it discovers the absence or the weakness of faith. "Why could we not cast him out?" "Because of your unbelief." I fancy the disciples were much surprised at the answer. If they were like me, they were. Of all the evils that hide themselves in the dark corners of our hearts, want of active faith is one of the hardest to detect.

But how happy, even with failing and tears and many humblings, to be working for God, and seeking honestly to please Him!

Ever yours lovingly,

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth.

London, N., 10/4/91.

MY DEAR SISTER IN OUR LORD JESUS,

It was with great pleasure that I received and read your welcome letter of the 6th of March. I am

thankful to our pitiful and gracious Father that, in the midst of so many things to try you, you are so comforted and held up.

The Holy Spirit's way of ministering comfort is very fine ; it is not with soft, empty words, which please for the moment, but leave us after a little as poor and downcast as ever. No ; He is "the Spirit of *Truth*" ; He lifts the veil, and shews us things *as they are* ; He takes the things of Christ, and shews them to us ; He shews us things to come. To give us the victory over present trials, He shews us the things that are above, where Christ is, at God's right hand. He lets us see plainly that the things that are seen are transient, only shadows, but the things that are not seen are eternal.

I shall be glad to hear how you advance under Dr. K—'s treatment. I shall be very thankful if it prove successful in your case ; but I know you will not build too much on it. It is right to use all wise means that God puts within your reach to prolong your life, for your own sake and for your dear husband's, and God's ; but in your heart leave the issue with God, and be prepared to take submissively and gratefully, from His hand, whatever decision He indicates. "Leave to His sovereign will to choose and to command." A question of a few days less or longer here is a small matter to one who is to live with Christ for ever. I don't need to say this, however ; I know it has long been settled in your heart. If we take all things as *His* appointments we can have no *disappointments*.

Ever yours in Him,

The blessedness of being a living sacrifice for God.

London, N., 15/4/91.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I was very glad of your letter of March 17th, which was sent on to me in Ireland. The Lord who has furthered you so manifestly at every step will not change, or fail you.

You have done well to give yourself wholly up to Him, and to have it for the aim and plan of your life to serve Him. Keep this fresh in your heart daily as a settled thing—"Whose I am, and whom I serve." And, still more, keep His perfect love for you as a thing settled in your heart for ever; "He loved me and gave Himself for me." It often brings tears from my heart to my eyes that my dearest Saviour, the One who made heaven and earth, took all my baseness and vileness to Himself and made it His own, and took the stripes I deserved for it all, on His own body on the tree, to set me eternally free; and all because He loved me with so perfect a love.

I wish I had seen all this even as clearly and deeply as I do now, from the time of my conversion. How much more true-heartedly I might have served Him! The time I have wasted in fighting with myself—a thing crucified, which I ought therefore to have reckoned dead—I might have spent in prayer and praise and service. Still I don't groan over it; I thank Him from my heart that I know His love a little better now, and expect to know it much better yet. But I congratulate you at the opening of your life on the opportunity of making it *all* a living sacrifice to Him. "Whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, *we are the Lord's.*"

Often make the Lord who died for you happy by repeating those words from your heart in His presence.

If there is anything I can do for you, do not fear to ask me ; write me at any time you can, and write me with open heart, letting me know about your inner life as well as your outward circumstances and your work.

Farewell. My wife joins me in love and kindest wishes.

Yours affectionately,

Who will sing His mercy loudest and longest?

London, N., 22/4/91.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

What a comfort to know that all is a part of God's perfect and everlasting purpose, and that the small details are as much cared for as the whole vast plan ! Your present anxiety about your wife ; your many cares about your children ; what many would call the great calamity of your life—the want of sight ; the troubles among Christians around you ; every disappointment and every sorrow—all are working together for your good, and for the accomplishment of God's purpose to conform you to the image of His Son. You *know* it, and are seeking to praise Him already for all, and will soon praise Him perfectly, and for ever.

I shall not be surprised, when we get to heaven, if you and I have a friendly contest as to which of us will sing His mercy the loudest and longest. If you win, I promise you'll have a hard battle first ; so be gathering up matter for your song, and perfecting yourself in your music, and be ready. We know Who will be listening to us, and how much our songs will please Him, and if He

adjudge you the first prize I will heartily rejoice. Farewell. Write soon.

Yours affectionately in Christ,

God can satisfy our souls in drought.

St. Leonards, 13/5/91.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

Through His mercy I am pretty nearly free from bronchitis ; but my voice is not quite what it was, as if something were amiss somewhere.

What pains we take about these bodies of ours ! May we be as careful that our souls are in health ! Faith and obedience sound simple, but a good many battles have to be fought, and much watchfulness used, in order to maintain them. I most gratefully acknowledge the exceeding goodness of God during these weeks of indoor confinement. I am not a patient prisoner naturally ; but He kept me quiet and happy ; and He is keeping me here too, where much keeping is needed. Is there anything too hard for Him ?

I am glad to hear of the young girl lately led to Christ ; may she be kept cleaving to Him with purpose of heart ! I would be glad to have the same good news to send you. I am not complaining, only I pray that God would use me to win souls. It is a time, I fear, of much deadness in most places. May He keep our hearts and make us an exception !

Believe me yours affectionately in Him,

God is a delightful Being.

Dundee, 23/10/91.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

It is as God wills. Our plans have been so put aside of late that it would be foolish to form new ones.

“I would be treated as a child,
And guided where I go.”

Yes ; God has been faithful and good all through. It is worth while to have a sharp illness away from home, just to prove how He can sustain and satisfy the heart, and keep it in perfect rest. I have had such delightful hours in the heavenly sanctuary, with my heart awake in the presence of God. What a delightful Being He is ! What a calling to be His eternal friends and worshippers ! Keep Him *first* in your heart, dear brother.

I cannot describe how unweariedly kind, morning, noon and night, these dear friends, Mr. and Mrs. Scott, have been to us. It is not a bad thing I can tell you to be sick in the house of genuine Scotch Christians. The Lord reward them richly !

Much love to ———,

God's ways are according to His character.

London, 5/11/91.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I do so heartily praise God for all the help He gave you in Lisbon, on your voyage, at the coast, and on your journey up country. You have been followed by the prayers of loving brethren, and by the eye of a faithful and almighty God. And I have no doubt that you are being helped, and will be helped. What a rest for the soul the character of God is ! He has taken great pains

to make us know it. The heavens declare His glory. Every discovery of astronomers affords us new ground for faith and a new cause for worship. And how plainly His name is written on this whole earth—on every bunch of moss, on every leaf, on the down on the bird's breast, on the insect's wing, as well as on the vast ocean or the great mountains. We see God's skill and goodness in every part of our bodies, and in every feeling and faculty of our souls. All history tells of *Him*; and how our own lives, to their smallest details, speak of Him! But turn to His Word, turn to His Son, meditate on the Cross; there all God's heart—all His nature to its deepest depths—comes out. Why has He taken such pains to open His name up to us? Is it not that in our inmost hearts we may count on His *acting* according to what He has shewn to be His *nature*?

We count on the sun shining, on the rivers flowing to the sea, on the earth bearing us up; we reckon with confidence on each being acting according to its nature; and it cannot but do that. Let us in the same way count on God acting according to *His* nature; He *cannot* deny Himself. What will a faithful God do but keep His promises? How could Love act unkindly? Or generosity turn selfish or cease to give?

You may think I am taking great pains to tell you what you know very well already. Yes; but we need to stir one another up, and help each other's faith. These things were the sunshine of my heart day and night during the weeks of my late illness, and they fill it with brightness at this moment. Take pains to grow in the knowledge of God, dear brother. Think much of what you have to do for Him; but think far more of what He has engaged by His nature and His promises to do for you.

Never forget in your heart that He gave His Son for you, and that *this* is the God that every moment surrounds you and is engaged for you. "The Lord is the portion of mine *inheritance* (the great eternal thing), and of my *cup* (that which I enjoy daily and hourly); *Thou maintainest my lot.*"

I can tell you very little about Clapton Hall, having been very little there for five months. I got my throat and voice injured early in the year, and for six months I have not been able to preach. But I have heard how things go on more or less fully. I was at the Lord's Supper there last Lord's-day—the first time for about three months. It was a specially happy meeting, guided all through by the Spirit of God. For the first time for quite five months I spoke for some fifteen minutes; my subject naturally was "Praising God." Seven or eight others took part, and there was not one discordant note to the end.

I do not hear of much quickening power put forth in souls by the Holy Spirit in connection with our Gospel meetings. Pray for us *on this point*, dear brother.

Now, Farewell.

Ever yours affectionately in Christ,

The shortest text ever preached from.

MY DEAR SISTER IN OUR LORD JESUS,

London, N., 3/12/91.

I could not tell you how good God was to us during that illness in Dundee. Most would have thought it a very dismal thing for both husband and wife to be ill at one time, in a strange house, almost five hundred miles from home; but I do not remember spending happier weeks all my life. The friends with whom we were staying

were as kind as they could be all through, and the presence and perfect love of God were a constant sunshine for the soul ; so that I would not in the least mind going through it all again, if it were God's will.

4th.—I promised at the meeting last night to speak on the shortest text that ever had been spoken from, or ever would be spoken from at Clapton Hall. You will own I was right when I tell you what my subject, D.V., is to be. It is that one letter "I." If God help me, I mean to take up the history of this "I" in Rom. vii. 9, to viii. 4. (1) *Careless* (v. 9); (2) *convicted* (v. 9); (3) *quickened by the Holy Spirit*, as appears from v. 22; (4) *struggling hard to overcome sin and keep the law, but defeated* (v. 15, etc.); (5) brought to the end of its own strength (like Jacob), and crying for help (v. 24); (6) DELIVERED—the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, when self-struggling is given up, setting him free (viii. 2).

Then Gal. ii. 19, 20 shows what the life of the delivered "I" is. It is Christ that lives in me; and now the life is not that of self and of efforts, but "by the faith of the Son of God." In 1 Cor. xv. 10 we have this delivered "I"—joined to Christ and dwelt in by the Spirit of God—(1) labouring abundantly for the Lord; (2) wanting no praise; for it is "*not I*, but the grace of God which was with me." Finally in Phil. iv. 13, we have this "I"—so feeble and useless in itself—able to say, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me"; just as a pen, held by a Shakespeare, can write the finest of poetry, or a sword, held by a Samson, can slay hundreds of enemies.

5th.—I got thus far when I had to get up and go to the Hall. I think I was helped in speaking by having just been writing out to you the substance of what I wished

to say, in an orderly and compact shape. May some of those who heard me get their old "I" well buried, and get Christ as a new "I" living in them.

I hope you will soon be able to write me another of your pleasant, kindly, helpful letters, telling me how you are both in soul and body, and all the news you have of your precious husband, whom I love much in the Lord.

Yours in His love,

Do not let God go till He fulfils His promises in your experience.

London, N., Undated.

BELOVED BROTHER,

What new experiences you have been enjoying! You are not merely seeing strange scenery and a new set of animals, but you are observing human nature in an altogether novel form. No doubt you will be a gainer by it all. Your powers of observation will be gratified and quickened; your readiness in meeting all sorts of unexpected needs will be strengthened; you will learn promptness in deciding what course out of many to take; and you will learn to know and deal with men. So I congratulate you on the gains you have made in various directions, apart from the one great work that has taken you to Africa.

But I trust I may congratulate you chiefly on the increased knowledge of God's love and faithfulness, and of all His perfections, that you have been storing up as the results of the experiences of these last few months. I know you have found Him true, for He is the "lie-less" God (Tit. i. 2);* and I trust you have been making it

* ὁ ἀψευδὴς Θεός, "God who cannot lie," literally "the lie-less God."—ED

the business of your life to get deeper into His heart, and thus to learn to trust and love Him better daily.

Don't you find it very sweet to get hold of His promises, and then to get hold of *Him* by means of His promises, and not to let Him go till He has fulfilled them? Sometimes these promises—to our shame be it said—do not produce in our hearts the entire faith God has a right to expect; we are not quite sure after all that He will do what He has said. In that case He has often to hold His hand back from blessing us, and wait till our heart trusts Him entirely. Then, when the full confidence springs up within us, how readily His hand opens to bestow upon us a shower of blessings!

Be very careful how you get on with fellow-labourers. Expect much from God; be strict and watchful with yourself; be forbearing with them. Allow for health, circumstances, natural temperaments and temptations, and inward struggles of which you may know nothing, but which may sorely try them. Remember that they are the companions a wise and loving God has allotted to you. If they cheer you, bless God for it; if they try you and teach you patience, bless God for it. But be sure you love them and aim at doing them good. Testiness often comes from unhappiness, and, if we knew all about it, we would have tears of pity, rather than words of blame.

Dear Spurgeon is gone, and thousands of hearts are full of sorrow for his loss. I hardly remember ever feeling such a sense of loss in my heart all my life, as since I heard of his death. I could write pages about him; but I forbear. May He who has taken him raise up men of faith, full of the Holy Ghost, to carry forward the banner he bore up so faithfully!

Your affectionate brother in Christ,

The wisdom of the Spirit is given to the man of prayer.

London, N, 12/5/92.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

Thank you for your letter. The account you give me of the — meetings agrees with the few things I have heard from others. I wish those who profess to deliver God's message (myself among them) were more careful as to what they put His holy name to. "He that hath My word, let him speak My word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat, saith the Lord?" What we say would very often be a good deal the better for being well sifted.

I trust you will get a life-long blessing from the sorrows you have been passing through. Do not blame others too strongly; you cannot know all the circumstances influencing their conduct, and therefore can hardly judge them fairly; "the day will declare it." But feel certain that their mistakes, and even their misdoings, were arranged or permitted of God for your truest gain. If you are led deeper into God's heart, and to know and value His love more highly, and to find your portion more entirely there, the eater has given you precious meat (Judges xiv. 14).

I rejoice with you in the blessing God is giving you in the meeting and the work. Be especially careful against trying, unconsciously, out of rivalry, to show that God is for you, by accepting "wood, hay and stubble" instead of "gold." But that counsel is hardly necessary; you are too much a man of prayer not to know this danger, by the wise teaching of the Holy Spirit.

Yours affectionately in Him,

The Christian's part in politics is prayer.*London, S.W., 6/7/92.*

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I cannot say much of blessing or progress in the work of the Lord here of late. I have been able to preach the Gospel steadily now in different places since I came back, often with conscious help from God, and not without much prayer ; but I know of no conversions.

The atmosphere of political strife is not favourable to Gospel work, I fear. I am sorry that the F—— meetings come on in the middle of this great agitation ; but God reigns, and nothing can resist His will or disappoint His purposes. In the part of London where I live the election is going on to-day. I do not vote, but I am earnestly praying to God. I have no faith in either party. But I trust in the living God, in whose hands are all events.

Yours affectionately in Him,

A Prince fallen in Israel.*London, N., 8/2/92.*

MY DEAR BROTHER,

May great grace rest on your visit to the North of Ireland ! My heart is with you there ; for little as I have been able to do for it, and seldom of late able to visit it, my love for it is as real as the day I left it. May you be made a blessing to many ! What you hear in the ear in your closet, may you be helped to proclaim to many as on the housetops, and may many hearts be opened to attend to the message !

Moses' rod swallowed all the other rods, and sorrowful thoughts about the irreparable loss of dear Spurgeon's

removal seem to swallow up nearly all other thoughts. It is surprising and pleasing to see how widely his loss is felt, and how all sorts of men unite in honouring him. Yesterday he was referred to, in terms of highest praise, both in the morning and evening services in St. Paul's Cathedral. What was said by the dean or canon in the evening is given in the newspapers; and higher or juster praise even you would hardly desire. I daresay he was spoken of in similar terms in thousands of pulpits yesterday. But all their speaking will not bring him back to us again. And he would not wish to return—no, even we would *not* wish him back. He is at length *resting*, after as hard a bit of toil and suffering as anyone in our day has had, so far as I know. And when the Commander has recalled him from the battlefield, who would wish the order reversed, and the presence of the King exchanged for fresh toil and pain and strife? Still one can hardly keep back the tears as we feel that we shall never hear him here any more. In what lovely network of silver he put the golden apples of truth! How deep he went into God's heart, and how well he told us what he found there! How his strong good sense, and pathos and humour—beyond any man's I ever knew—and marvellously stored memory, all poured out their riches to set God's truths in their brightest and most attractive light! And in what a stream of simple, perfect language those riches were given out! I expect God to give us other "mighty men" for His battles, but such an one as Spurgeon I never hope to see again; so great, and yet so simple, so true-hearted, so courageous, and unselfish. I could write pages on pages about him, and yet feel as if I had not half expressed what was in my heart.

I greatly fear that numbers of false professors have been

gathered in, by means of after-meetings, in many places, to whom points and forms are everything, and the possession of God's life in the soul nothing.

Tell J—— that Christ is sweeter to me than ever.

Affectionately in Him,

"For me to live is Christ."

Dundee, 19/9/92.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

It did my heart good to hear from you ; for I have hardly heard from anyone in B—— since I was there in April. You do not mention any of the brethren by name ; but I trust all that I know there keep well and are walking stedfastly in the ways of the Lord. There is nothing worth living for but to serve and please Him.

Through mercy my general health is good, though my throat keeps very tender, and my voice is somewhat husky and feeble. All is well, however. If I cannot preach as much as formerly, or have to cease altogether, God can give me some other bit of work to do for Him—"to each according to his several ability." The great thing is, not the *kind* of work we do, but that we do it *faithfully*.

I have been silent from preaching for six weeks, seeking to get my voice strengthened ; last night I had the great joy of preaching once more in a small hall in this town. I hope to preach all next month in London, and earnestly ask your prayers and those of the other brethren in B—— ; remember that my *heart* needs quite as much help from God as my throat.

Yours in Christ's love,

The only right ambition.

London, N., 26/10/92.

MY DEAR ———,

Let me with my dear wife congratulate you on the return of another birthday, and wish you every good thing a loving God sees best for you in the new year that opens for you to-morrow. Make much of *Him* in your heart; be much in His society; count much on His constant help; make it the ambition of your life to please Him, and happiness will take care of itself.

I have no book worth sending you: the one I post with this gives a short account of the life of one of the holiest and most attractive Christians I ever met with.

Your affectionately,

The end of the Lord with Job.

London, N., 6/11/92.

MY DEAR ———,

Why does God not do better for us than He sometimes does? He *never* could do better for us than He does. I am reading through Job at present. Could God not have done better for Job than let property, children, health, everything be swept away? Job thought so. He thought God had dealt very hardly with him. I read this morning the beginning of God's answer to him in chap. xxxviii., pointing out the folly of one who knew nothing presuming to sit in judgment on God's ways. We know in the end how much reason Job, humbled and silenced, had for praising God for *all* His dealings, even the hardest and most trying. We shall all see that one day, and we shall then own with lowly

and praising hearts that it was "the right way" by which He led us to "a city of habitation."

Ever lovingly in Him,

The engagements of the New Covenant.

London, N., 20/11/92.

MY DEAR E.,

B—— speaks of getting great rest of soul by a complete surrender of herself and her will to God. It is written, "Yield yourselves unto God;" and again, "Present your bodies a living sacrifice." I trust she will fully count on God helping her to maintain the surrender. Our safe position is to count on nothing we have done or are to do, but to reckon with sure confidence on God fulfilling His engagements to us hour by hour and moment by moment. How few count on Him to fulfil all the engagements of the new covenant in Heb. viii.; or that word, "I will cause them to walk in my ways;" or "I will put my fear in their hearts that they shall not depart from Me;" or, "I will subdue your iniquities;" or the many words spoken of what the Holy Ghost will do when He comes to dwell in the heart! Many will theorize and speculate about perfectionism or anti-perfectionism; about the measure of attainable holiness; but few will open up their hearts for God to inscribe His own writing there, and boldly reckon on His doing it according to His Word.

I am afraid not many watch over their own hearts, their motives—*why* they do this or that. They say they are "complete in Christ;" the blood "cleanses" them; "self-inspection" would lead to "bondage," etc.; but unless sin is detected and confessed, and forgiveness for

it sealed home on the conscience, *its power will never be broken*. On the other hand we can reckon on God to subdue confessed sin and make us free from it.

It was a dreadful thing for Joshua when an army with God's name put on it was defeated, even though only 36 men out of 600,000 were slain. "What wilt Thou do for *Thy great name*?" And is it not a shocking thing for us who are joined to Christ, who name a living, almighty Saviour always with us, if we are defeated?

Yours affectionately,

Submission.

London, N., 21/2/93.

MY DEAR —,

The words "submit yourselves therefore to God," in James iv., have for some days been often in my heart and have helped me much. I got into impatience and conflict with God lately, finding myself unable, because of the state of my health, to do what I thought I ought to do. Performing in my soul an absolute act of submission to God gave me great rest. To resist His will is madness; to let our wills flow in the current of His will is peace. Who ever stiffened his neck against Him and prospered? Harmony between Him and us must be maintained, not by His submission to us, but by our submission to Him. I am telling you what passed through my mind. Yes, dear —, it is best to yield; best to trust Him utterly. For those who do, there is peace now, and in the end there is "the wealthy place" spoken of in Psalm lxvi. into which through many trials God at length leads the trusting soul.

Ever affectionately,

"In labours more abundant."

Lisburn, N. Ireland, 17/4/93.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

If some overwise people choose to separate themselves, we are just where we were ; and we will pray God to give them a better mind, and lowlier and more loving hearts.

I am greatly enjoying my visit to Ireland and my work here ; and I am getting plenty to do. Each of the two Lord's-days I have been in Ballymena, I have had an afternoon meeting for Christians, and an evening gospel meeting, besides being at the morning meeting for the Lord's Supper ; yesterday I spoke for half an hour to the Sunday-school children and enjoyed that as much, at least, as anything else all day. The meetings were large yesterday, but not quite so full as the Lord's-day before, the continuous rain keeping most of the country people away. The Lord helped and cheered us.

Last Monday evening we had a most helpful Bible reading—a real conversational one, only *guided* by myself—with quite 100 persons present, and we hope to have another helpful one to-night.

On Wednesday evening last I had *such* an interesting meeting in Belfast ; some 600 were present, two-thirds I think men, mostly young men. At the close they all stood up to ask me to come back for that night week, which I purpose doing. It was a meeting of *Christians*, chiefly of those in fellowship in the different meetings ; not a weekly or regular one, but one to which they had been specially invited the Lord's-day before.

Then on Friday evening, at a place five miles from this, I had a Gospel meeting. The room was filled, a large

part of those present being young men ; I much enjoyed preaching to them.

The Lord has given a spirit of hearing in this country, notwithstanding the political excitement. Perhaps the anxiety on that subject makes them readier to turn to God. There is a good deal of this turning to God in the North of Ireland about this matter of home rule ; a sort of religious seriousness in the minds of the people, who are resolved not to submit to a government controlled by Roman Catholic priests, and yet are trusting in God that they shall not be driven to resistance.

Yours affectionately in our Lord Jesus,

The shield of faith.

London, N., 9/6/93.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I greatly enjoyed my visit to the North of Ireland. I feel myself growing aged and of less use, but I rejoice to see God caring for His work in the dear old places to which my heart clings.

What a needful thing *the shield of faith* is in our daily conflicts ! to have His perfect love for us as a thing immovably settled in our hearts. We are in danger sometimes of dropping it, and giving Satan an advantage.

Yours in our Lord Jesus,

The flesh must be crucified ; it cannot be changed.

London, N., 6/12/93.

MY DEAR ———,

Through God's mercy I am able to go on with the work He gives me to do, in praying, meditating, writing,

visiting and preaching. I have some troublesome disappointments, but on the whole my life is happy and filled with His goodness.

I see I have used the word disappointments. I suppose the way to avoid them is to give our souls the charge we find in Ps. lxii: "My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from Him." *He* will never disappoint. Every now and then I find myself expecting some good thing at last from myself, and getting into the dumps when I find the Ethiopian's skin as black as ever. The best way is Paul's way—"I am crucified with Christ." It is odd how soon we forget, and how slow we are to learn.

How is your Gospel work going on? Are you helped to pray much about it?

Yours affectionately in Him,

Our life in the last Adam is beyond the touch of death.

London, N., 9/1/94.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I have heard with very great concern about the illness of your son, and would assure you of my sympathy with you in this fresh sorrow. "Fear not: I am with thee," is God's word to your heart. "When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee," is His promise. You have passed through deep waters more than once or twice since I knew you: did He break His word to you? Was He not with you to hold you up and comfort you? And He that has been with you in six troubles, will not forsake you in the seventh. What a difference His presence makes!

It gave me great joy to hear that your son had in his heart received Christ as his Saviour: that means that

he became a partaker of *eternal* life. What is the life of the body after all? Our body is dead because of sin. The strongest and healthiest have the seeds of death in them, and are sure to die in a little while if Christ does not come. But death cannot touch the soul that is joined to Christ. The death of the body will only set it free to go to Christ, and the soon coming resurrection will clothe it again with a body like Christ's in glory. You and your dear boy will soon meet again in His presence and likeness; and then, no more parting or tears.

I do not doubt that you will get much soul-help through this sore sorrow; I trust, too, that your son R—— will get much help from God through it. God is love; and if He afflicts it is because His heart wants to bless us, and He sets our eternal welfare far above our earthly peace and ease. I do pray that you may get much, *much* closer to God, and understand the perfectness of Christ's work for you as you have never done.

May your dear wife also get much blessing through the trouble! Pray much: *pray much*.

Ever yours affectionately in our Lord Jesus,

In what sense is Christ our life?

London, N., 12/2/94.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

There cannot be very much work now left for me. In another month I shall finish my sixty-eighth year: only two off the three-score and ten! Shuldham Henry, who was called home on New Year's day, was, I think, ten years younger than I. He preached here all November, and little did I think, when I said Goodbye, that he was so soon to close his work on earth and to go into the

presence of the Lord ! I would be dreadfully ashamed of my work, for nearly thirty-five years, if it was to be closed now. I have not been all that time like one alone, who might fairly excuse the smallness and poorness of his work by the feebleness of his abilities and resources. *I have had all the fulness of Christ to make use of in every bit of work given me to do.* Why have I not made a wiser and fuller use of it, and done something for God worthy of the One who has stooped to take me into partnership ? Alas ! Alas ! what can I say ? What has hindered me ? Self-will and self-indulgence and self-seeking and unbelief, and other such things. And are these excuses ? The only thing I can do is to plead the precious, precious blood shed for my sins : *that* will not gain the reward of the diligent and faithful servant, but thank God, it puts away all the sin, perfectly and for ever. May the same mercy that provided that priceless sacrifice, make the brief time that is left more to His praise and honour !

Let us PRAY MORE.

Might I ask you and our brother M—— to talk over the subject of "Christ dwelling in our hearts," or (the same in another form) "I live no longer, but Christ liveth in me." In what sense is Christ our life ? Do we trust God with *Christ's* faith ? Do we love God, and saints, and sinners, with *Christ's* love ? Do we bear with *Christ's* patience ? Do we encounter difficulties, etc., with *Christ's* courage ? Are Christ's faith and love and patience and courage His life ? and have they so become ours that we can practically use them ? The subject of our union with Christ deserves to be gone into more deeply.

Yours affectionately in our Lord Jesus,

Self-judgment the condition of blessing.

London, N., 1894.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

This year I have had to abstain as much as possible from all brain work, and "study to be quiet"; so that many letters have had to remain unwritten. Through God's mercy, however, I have been singularly well for the last two months, and closely engaged in His work, and happy in it and in Him.

I suppose if you were here now you would see a good many changes in the brotherhood at Clapton Hall, but, meeting them from week to week and oftener, I observe but few. Our meetings are generally very happy and profitable. There is a good deal of unity and love among us, and I trust, in some hearts at least, a deepening of spiritual life. We have our troubles, for all are not spiritual, and those who are carnal need a good deal of patience and wise and loving help. But we have a God who is equal to all difficulties; and at His throne we *obtain* (not *seek* merely) mercy, and *find* (not simply *ask*) grace to help in time of need.

Our Gospel meetings are large, and we have some souls won for Christ, but not so many as, with such an arm working with us and for us, we think we *ought* to see. I often ask, "*Why not?*" and try first to examine my own heart and ways, to see that I am not the Achan that is bringing defeat on the Lord's armies, that I am not keeping some Babylonian garment that ought to be burnt, or some piece of gold that ought to go into the Lord's treasury, or seeking glory for myself, and not for Him altogether and solely. Then, after trying my own ways, I seek to stir others up to see that they are not hindering the Spirit

of God by any allowed or unsearched-for sin. Oh that somehow we could get down into the dust before God, like Israel at Ebenezer, when they judged themselves, poured out water, offered the sucking lamb, and God thundered, and the enemies were defeated !

Yours affectionately in Christ,

Our faith hardly a grain; His faithfulness like the great mountains.

Crieff, N.B., 31/8/94.

MY DEAR BROTHER IN OUR LORD,

Thank you for letting me know the nature of your trouble. . . . In what a variety of ways faith in the living God is tried ! I think growingly less of mine, and indeed often feel that "*If ye had faith* as a grain of mustard seed" might well be addressed to me. But HE abideth faithful; even "if we believe not." Is it not His "faithfulness" that is compared to the great mountains, while the "grain of mustard seed" is too great to describe our faith ?

As to your question about Satan magnifying our sins, and how best to act when he manages to distress our consciences through them—I can hardly say much ; I am not as well informed of Satan's devices as I ought to be. But my remedy in all cases of conscience-trouble is the precious blood of Jesus. I face the accusations of the devil and of conscience, and own all that is true in them, and then dwell in my heart on the fact that the Son of God died for it all. To doubt its being entirely put away would be to dishonour the sacrifice of Christ, and to grievously offend the God who provided and has accepted it.

Kindest wishes,

Always in triumph.

Grantown-on-Spey, 6/9/94.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I trust all goes well with you in soul, body, family, and business. You have a heavenly Father who is a universal Protector and Provider, and who never slumbers or forgets.

Through His mercy I am much the better for my quiet resting time. An attempt to help in carrying a heavy trunk down a set of three weary Scotch stairs twisted my back, and brought on suddenly a sharp attack of lumbago. But that, too, has done me good, by saving part of my time from walking, for communion and meditation, and I am now a good deal recovered.

I trust all goes on comfortably and in a manner worthy of God in Clapton Hall. Ask the brethren that prayer for me may be continued, and say that I am constantly offering up supplications on their behalf.

Yours affectionately,

Who are the godly?

London, N., 26/10/94.

MY DEAR M——,

Will you accept my wife's and my own hearty good wishes for your birthday to-morrow. May it be the beginning of a specially happy new year in your life.

Let me give you a text to help you in the accomplishment of this wish for you : " But know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for Himself."

Imagine a king going through his palace with an attendant, and saying to him : " This vessel, and this, and this,

may be used for servants and guests ; but this one, and this, must be reserved for my own use. Set them apart for myself." This is what God says about "the godly."

But who are the godly ? Practically, I believe it means those who are unreservedly yielded up to God, to let Him mould and fashion them after His own will. Who would not covet the honour of "being set apart for Himself ?"

The Bible does not teach that anyone here can attain sinlessness, but *it does speak of a perfectness of purpose and of heart*, which God's Spirit can work in us, that will control our life for Him.

Accept the little book which I send with this.

Yours ever affectionately,

God is good and does good.

London, N., 12/11/94.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I trust you and yours are all well, and that you are walking in the light, enjoying communion with Him who is Light.

After I came back from Scotland, early in October, I had a sudden attack of erysipelas in the face, which kept me in bed some days ; but it soon passed quite away, and left no trace behind. Since then I have been very closely and happily occupied in the Lord's work. I do not know that I ever had a busier month or enjoyed my service *for Him* more. He *is* good and *does* good, and deserves the unreserved and continual surrender of ourselves to Him. *Count on Him* much and always.

Yours in Him affectionately,

The Church embraces both the carnal and the spiritual.

London, N., 8/11/94.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

Thank you for your letter received this morning, and for the kindly tone in which it is written. I own I felt pained by the former one ; pardon me if I at all misunderstood you.

In dealing with the questions to which you refer, it should never be forgotten that there are *spiritual* Christians, and there are *carnal* Christians, and the Church of God contains both. All are not full grown. "Let as many as be perfect, be thus minded ; and if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you." Paul never thought of separating from these imperfect ones and going on without them ; the thought of separating from Christians never entered his mind. How can a hand separate from the foot, or an eye from the ear ? Is Christ divided ? If they are ignorant let them be instructed ; if soiled, let their feet be washed. The "heretic," or "the wicked person," giving no evidence for the time that he is the Lord's, must be "put away." But such cases are rare.

Much forbearance must be exercised by Christians of different degrees of spiritual growth and enlightenment. True, we are commanded to be of the same mind and judgment ; but we must be patient with one another till God makes us so.

Surely these remarks apply to Christians who have not light to separate from the sects in which they find themselves. God receives them, and we know He commands us to receive them as Christ receives us ; He never bids us refuse or separate from them. They are as my arm. my finger, my ear ; I cannot do without them.

By all means let us instruct them as we have opportunity. But is arguing with them when they come among us the best way of instructing them? Be assured *far* the best way is when they come among us, to let them see by our love, and by the power of the Holy Ghost in our meetings, that *Christ in our midst* is no theory but a reality.

As to baptism; I think *very* rarely indeed is anyone received at Clapton Hall, without the subject of baptism having been pressed on his attention. It is not possible for any of us to give light, or to force obedience without it; neither, if Christ receives a soul ignorant of His will about baptism, can we refuse him.

As to brethren, when at distant places for a time, staying away from the local assembly for "the Supper" and going to hear preaching somewhere, certainly those who know of their so doing ought in love to speak to them about it and ascertain their reasons.

Remember that a number of professed Christians gathering in a certain outward form, where none are received but those who are of one judgment with the leaders, where the members of Christ's body as such are not welcomed, where there is no power of God's Spirit in the worship or ministry, where Christ's voice is not heard by the believing soul, and where He is not really allowed to guide and rule, can hardly—merely because of correct form—be regarded as an *assembly of God*.

I do not stay away from such, because I have some opportunity of trying to get things set right; but quiet brethren without gift, or sisters, are different. I don't say they are right, but do not judge them. Neither do I say they are right in going to hear preaching at the time for the Breaking of Bread. Only remember that this

is a matter for brotherly remonstrance, and *not for separation*. Of course the staying away from a *spiritual assembly* because of carelessness and worldliness, is a much sadder matter. Those who do this are sorely in need of help.

I am writing in much haste. Pardon me if I have overlooked any of the points you have referred to. The Lord bless you and make you useful to your fellow-saints, both the spiritual and carnal.

Yours affectionately in Christ,

Nothing so sure as His love.

London, N., 1895 (?).

MY DEAR SISTER IN CHRIST,

By a letter forwarded to me here I learn the startling and sorrowful news of your dear husband's removal. I say *startling*, because I did not know that his bodily health was affected, or that his life was in any danger, and *sorrowful*, because of the loss to myself personally—for he was one of my dearest and oldest friends—to saints at —, who will sorely miss him, and especially to you and the dear children.

The good Lord comfort and sustain you. His life would have been a heavy burden had his mental trouble continued, and God has mercifully relieved him of that burden, and you too, dear sister. But there is *far* more than this relief. At this moment when I am writing, dear John — is seeing the King in His beauty. Thank God he left no doubt on anyone's mind who knew him as to what country he was going.

How different life will be to you now, dear sister, without him! But our Lord Jesus will not leave you nor forsake

you. Count on His love as the surest of all sure things.
Read Is. liv. 5, 10.

Yours affectionately in Christ,

Rich in faith.

London, N., 7/2/95.

MY DEAR —,

I think I have a good while been in debt to you, and, remembering that we are to owe no one anything, I at last set my account straight, and put the burden of debt on you, hoping that you will be careful not to carry it long.

I go about much, am helped in the work God gives me to do, and rejoice in His perfect love. Please don't think I am satisfied with myself or my work. That would be very far from the truth.

If a man had millions in the Bank of England, but restricted himself in business by want of boldness or diligence in drawing cheques on his account there, his friends would know what to think if they heard him groaning about his poverty or the low state of his business. I think you will know what I mean.

Ever yours affectionately,

The Spirit teaches us to live by faith.

London, N., 22/5/95.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

Through mercy I am fairly well in health, and am kept living by faith. That is, I am a poor beggar living on another's bounty. There is a law of sin in my members which would make me kick at this humbling way of living

but the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus sets me free from this law of sin and death, and makes me glad to be constantly dependent on so bountiful and loving a Giver.

The only remedy for deadness in ourselves, or others, is *believing prayer*—prayer that *counts on God*. He is Himself the Author of prayer like that; how then could He refuse it? Feeling, or apparent feeling, in prayer does not count for much with God; what He values is *faith*. I trust the Lord is keeping your soul close to Himself.

Yours affectionately in Christ,

Our real treasures cannot be lost.

London, N., 29/5/95.

MY DEAR MRS. —,

I long to hear how you are. All things, I know, are sure to be well with a child of "the Lord Almighty," for how could He suffer anything to injure one whom He perfectly loves? But sorrows often lie in the path through which He leads us; and He does not forbid us to enter into each other's sorrows, any more than to rejoice in each other's joy.

If it be His will I trust you are better and stronger, and that you are often in your Father's bosom: "He that *dwelleth* in love, *dwelleth* in God, and God in him."

I was concerned that your loss on your last visit to London was so serious. What strange things God suffers to happen to us! but He has no doubt a good reason. If the loss of a few earthly things makes our hearts rejoice that *we have treasures which CANNOT be lost*, and leads us to value them more, our loss will not have been in vain.

Yours affectionately.

The presence of Christ a reality.

Carnoustie, N.B., 22/8/95.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

Did I tell you that a dressing bag, containing, besides other things, all our necessities for our night's stay in Edinburgh, was carried off from the barrow on which I had laid it down? We prayed about it, and used all the means we could think of, but I own I was afraid that some thief had taken it, and that the hope of recovering it was slight. *The loss did me good*, for it made me consider what in my conduct and state of heart needed such discipline. I am glad to say that my bag turned up at Alloa, and I expect it here to-morrow. So again, the Lord is good and faithful.

How are things going on at Clapton Hall? I seek to help you. . . . I wrote to — suggesting that he should make the whole business a matter of believing prayer and of patient waiting on God. I reminded him that we have in Christ a living Head, *One who is in our midst* when we assemble, and that *therefore* we abstain from the choosings, and votings, and arrangements, that prevail in the denominations around. Surely we can count on help in our difficulties, and shew that we count on it by patiently waiting; and *assuredly* we shall not wait in vain.

Let us pray—you and I—more about these matters than we have ever done yet.

Love to you all,

Christianity is an inward thing.

London, N., 8/10/95.

BELOVED BROTHER,

Grace and (as grace pays all debts and provides *everything freely*, therefore) *peace* be with you.

It did me good to hear from you when I was in Scotland. I was glad to know you had been at Portrush for a while; and though it has not made you young again, I trust you are finding that it has added something to your freshness and strength. You and I must make a bargain not to grow old. You know that Mr. Chapman is having his best days at 93! and Mr. Müller is preaching every Lord's-day to large numbers at Bethesda, and he is 90! Is it not written, "They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength"; and again, "In old age they shall bring forth fruit"; and again, "To hoar hairs I will carry you," that is, make children of you again and keep you young? Shall we, then, strike hands on this, and agree that we will not allow a few "bits" of years to make old men of us? True, we cannot do what men of five and twenty can; but on the other hand they cannot do what *we* can. There are November and December fruits on the tree of life; and a peach grown in December is worth a dozen of those grown in July. So let us lift up our heads, and straighten our backs, and go on with bright faces. "The perfect day" is before us.

I have seen this week one of the very finest sights I ever saw in my life—about five thousand people gathered at the invitation of A—— M—— in Charrington's great Hall, simply to wait on God. There was no array of banners, and trumpets, and "volleys"; no ritualistic processions, and incense, and spectacles; nothing but

the deeply spiritual words of Mr. — and a few others, and *much* prayer. I was there yesterday and the night before ; I cannot be there to-day, greatly as I desire it.

Much as I like to see men out of loyalty to Christ learning His will about baptism and worship, this earnest waiting on God, the living God, gave me a greater joy. For after all it is not outward forms that we put first ; it is hearts fully trusting and up to their light following Christ.

Love to all,

The Kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.

London, N., 15/11/95.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

It always does me good to hear from you. Thank you for your last letter. I rejoice to see that the Lord is holding you up and helping you, enabling you to go to — as in old times, on the old errand, and giving blessing on the work in your Hall. He is a good Master to serve. He sticks to His servants. Here is a verse about Him I heard lately :—

“I know a Friend who sticketh fast,
And keeps His love from first to last,
And JESUS is His name:
An earthly brother drops his hold,
Is sometimes hot, and sometimes cold,
But JESUS is the same.”

Through mercy I am able to go on with the work He sets me ; sometimes feebly enough, sometimes with comfort and help. We have our troubles here as in other places, for there are carnal Christians everywhere ; we know the trouble they caused in Corinth, and they do the same still. I suppose the best way is to abide in Christ

and seek to minister Him in the power of the Holy Ghost, and to pray much.

I have lost *much* during my course as a Christian by neglecting this last thing—this “praying much.” It is, I suppose, what we are warned about in Hebrews—“departing from the living God.” Apart from Him our souls are a mere mass of sin and death, and lashing at them does no good. Believing prayer must bring God in; *He* cleanses, *He* quickens, *He* creates anew.

It is only by degrees that I am learning what an awful legalist I have been; how I have stuck unconsciously at the old covenant in many points, instead of counting on God to constantly fulfil in me the promises of the new covenant. But I suppose you have often been just as foolish, and have suffered for it, and are beginning to find it out. May we both learn it more perfectly!

Did I tell you of the great meetings in Charrington’s Hall to wait on God? Very precious they were. There was little speaking, except by Mr. —, and his speaking was searching and stirring to an unusual degree. The burden of the meetings was confession and prayer, vocal and *often silent*. Think of three, five, and it is said, at the last meeting, seven thousand Christians, gathered thus to wait on God—to own how miserably they had failed to live up to their heavenly calling, and to cry to God for the power of His Holy Spirit! It was a rare sight. Thank God for permitting me to see it.

Give me all the North of Ireland news you can. I suppose the old trouble goes on of confounding outward order with the power of the Holy Ghost, or rather making much of the first and hardly noticing the absence of the last. When will they learn that Christianity is life and power, and not mere forms or formlessness?

The Lord bless and guide and use you. My loving salutations to your wife and daughter and sons.

Ever yours affectionately in Him,

How few get and keep inside the vail with God!

London, N., 29/11/95.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,

I dare say that not the least difficult work for you both is to keep your hearts in happy, unbroken communion with God. I think the lesson is pretty well mastered when you have learned that the work is quite beyond your power, and have put it into the hands of God and counted on His doing it. In 2 Cor. iii, we read, "The epistles of Christ, . . . written . . . with the Spirit of the living God . . . on fleshy tables of the heart"; and in Phil. ii, "It is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do"; and in Eph. ii, "We are His workmanship;" and again in Heb. viii, "I will put my laws in their hearts."

But to learn to get to the end of self in this business, and *truly* to count on God, I find time spent with Him absolutely necessary, owning our unbelief and heart wanderings, meditating on His truth, and especially on Himself—His character, His love, His grace, His almightiness, His unchangeable faithfulness, etc. I find that the part of the day I thus spend is the most fruitful part of all, for it helps the work of all the rest; and if I practically separate myself from God, by going on without the consciousness of His presence and help, it only leads to failure and sorrow. "Without Me ye can do nothing." There is no truer word in the Bible.

Have you ever got hold of this promise, "I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from Me"?

(Jer. xxxii, 40). Do you believe in your heart that God binds Himself to do that ?

We had our half-yearly fellowship meeting on Tuesday, and it was a particularly interesting one. But each meeting for the last two or three years our numbers have grown fewer ; we are now about 620. Ah me, if those 620 were filled with God's Spirit and on fire with His love ! But it is far otherwise ; few seem to get and keep inside the veil with God.

Yours affectionately in our Lord,

The character of God is the ground of our faith.

18/1/96.

MY DEAR FRIEND AND BROTHER IN CHRIST,

It was a great pleasure both to my wife and myself to receive your letter of Dec. 30th. You must not think — Why then not acknowledge it sooner ? Many things have hindered me. One of the oldest and dearest friends I had in London, Mr. John Morley, died on New Year's day, and it is an event which absorbs a good deal both of my heart and time. He died in the full faith of the Gospel, his last words being, "My Saviour, my Saviour."

Yes ; God *was* good to you in opening your heart, both to know your own sinfulness and His love, and then in giving you such dear friends as Mr. and Mrs. —, so well fitted, both by their knowledge and their loving example, to help you on in the ways of God. I see that He is good to you in Berne. These Sunday morning meetings, and the Wednesday Bible-readings, will be a great help, and will give you opportunities of helping others. Christians cannot do without one another. The

Holy Spirit dwelling within us unites us and draws us to one another. If He is not resisted and grieved, He will not let us put one another away and isolate ourselves. "The Head cannot say to the feet, I have no need of you."

Our power for helping others lies in what, I think, God has largely given you, our power for loving them, and in our keeping the communication between us and our Head in heaven clear and unobstructed. Is it not by the grace of God that it is kept thus open? Yes; but our watchfulness, our open-hearted, believing prayer, our meditation on the Word, are the means He uses to accomplish that end. He bids us "abide in Me, and I in you," as well as promises to keep and uphold.

We often speak of faith as if it was a very simple, easy thing. I daresay it is for angels. For myself I find it needs much watchfulness and care, and with all the pains I take I manage it but poorly. To trust God when you feel your heart stupid, and earthly, and ungodly, is not quite a child's task. Yet it is that, and nothing else! Only a little child utterly trusting a father. But how legal, how unlike a little child I often am! Pray for me. The character of God is the ground of our faith. What state of our own heart, then, should ever dim or diminish our trust in *that*? He cannot deny Himself; He must always act according to His nature. We may be always quite sure on that point. I was helped much this morning by seeing, in Numbers xiv., how well Moses understood this, and how it enabled him to lay hold on God as he did. And David's way, even when he had sorely misbehaved, of turning to God and counting on Him, as if nothing was amiss, has many a time both surprised and taught me. See Ps. xxxiv., with its heading, and 1 Sam. xxx. 6-8 with all that had gone before.

With our warm wishes for a happy year all through 1896.

Yours affectionately,

Real faith is produced by the Holy Ghost alone.

Felpham, Bognor, 18/1/96.

BELOVED BROTHER,

I am concerned in heart to get so poor an account of your health of late. I do hope that this state of things was only temporary, and that you will soon be stronger; nay, that you are already beginning to improve. God has often heard our prayers for you, and I trust He will soon shew that He does so still. We both know His love, and sick or well we, by His grace, can trust Him.

You see I put in "by His grace"; for faith is not always so simple and easy as it looks, or as we often, rightly enough, make it in our preaching. I do not like the change in Gal. v., in the R.V., from "the fruit of the Spirit is . . . *faith*" to "the fruit of the Spirit is . . . *faithfulness*." The change suggests that we can go on believing of ourselves without the Holy Spirit; I am quite sure we cannot. There is no principle in my flesh deeper rooted or more unconquerable than unbelief; it is like colt's-foot or couch-grass; you think every fibre of it is gone, but wait a few weeks, and alas! what is this? The field is all bristling again with the hateful old thing.

Still it is easy after all *when* God gives us the disposition of a little child. No matter how cross or naughty a child has been, it seems to keep its faith in its father and mother undisturbed. It does not say like some of us, "I am bad; I have done ill; I will distrust my mother." I have seen the sight—after a naughty fit, after a whipping perhaps,

it will run to her arms and sob itself asleep on her bosom. Like David in Psalm xxxiv., or 1 Sam. xxx. Oh to have this intimate heart-confidence in *God's character*, God's most lovely, perfect, adorable character.

Have you heard that my oldest and dearest English friend, Mr. John Morley, was called home on Jan. 1st? He was eighty-eight and a half years old, full of years and ripe for heaven. I cannot tell you what a difference his death will make to me.

Then, since I came here, another dear friend has followed—the eldest sister of Mr. Alex. Stewart. She died with Mr. and Mrs. Sparks at Bath; her brother was with her, and the day before yesterday took her body to Glasgow for burial. When will Jesus come?

We all send loving wishes.

God will commune with our hearts.

London, N., 5/5/96.

MY DEAR ———,

I am very sorry I have not been able to see you and say good-bye before you sail. I can only write you a very few lines, but I do heartily ask God, whose kindness I have proved for many years, to watch over and bless you.

Do not miss His friendship. You are away from father and mother and all old friends. Do not be so mad, dear ———, as to forget and turn your back on *the* One Friend who, in all the universe, loves you most and can serve you best. You are a sinner. Trust God's Son as your Saviour, and God will bless you for trusting His Son.

To-day I was at the far end of London, saw much of its splendour and wealth, its gold and silver, and gay dresses and fine carriages; I would not give what I have

in God's love for it all, a million times over. Get *that* treasure.

I wish I could persuade you, dear —, to take a little quiet time every day to turn your thoughts to your own heart, and talk with God about it.

Your loving grandfather,

Loved day and night without a moment's interruption.

Bognor, 6/4/96.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I trust you found the Lord with you in your service for Him, and that you have returned encouraged and refreshed. We read about fruit trees, found near besieged cities, which were to be kept as food for the Israelites during the siege.

Of all the birthdays that I remember this 70th was much the happiest. The great kindness of many friends did gladden me. But it was not that which made it so peculiarly happy; it was the sense in my heart of the wonderful love of God—a sense that I hope may never leave me as long as I live on earth; I am sure it never will afterwards. Loved as Christ, because a part of Christ; loved perfectly; loved day and night without a moment's interruption; and with a love that is to go on for ever and ever! I don't wonder that Paul felt that we need to be strengthened "with all might by God's Spirit in the inward man . . . to know the love of Christ"; and I don't wonder that he said of the love that it "passeth knowledge"; truly it does.

Yours affectionately in Him,

The storm brought Christ.

London, N., 7/5/96.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I have been often thinking of the troubles through which you were passing when you wrote to me, and would be glad to know how things are with you now.

It is a great comfort that God has said, He will not suffer us to be tried beyond what we are able. He knows our frame, and remembers that we are dust. As a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him. He stayeth His rough wind in the day of the east wind.

It is a comfort also to remember that it was the storm that brought Christ, walking on the sea, to His perplexed disciples, and He is still "that same Jesus."

Through His mercy my wife and I are well, and full of the goodness of the Lord.

Yours affectionately in Christ,

God giveth us richly all things to enjoy.

Dublin, 30/5/96.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

We had a "beautiful" journey yesterday. I asked God for a good seat and pleasant company, and we got such a nice carriage, with only two ladies in it besides ourselves. How glad I was, shortly after we started, to see them bring out their Bibles and their "Daily Light"! We got quite intimate before the journey was over. One was a Presbyterian, the other, I fancy, a Methodist; but both earnest Christians. Their company greatly shortened the journey.

We are staying here in a beautiful spot, quite out in the country; flowers and singing birds all around us; a houseful of pleasant children, and a kind host and hostess. So, if our hearts are kept right with our great unchanging Friend, we ought to be—to put it mildly—content.

Yours affectionately in Christ Jesus,

Heart-time with God is indispensable.

Ballymena, 18/6/96.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I need not say how heartily I wish you God's blessing in your new home. "The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the dwellings of the righteous."

As for ourselves, we are, through God's mercy, very well—cheered with His presence, and with the warm reception of saints everywhere we have gone.

Our "fellowship meeting" on Monday was one long to be remembered. I don't recall a meeting in which the guiding and power of the Holy Spirit of God were more manifest. All the speakers, as led of God, followed the one road, but new landscapes opened to each, and we were blessedly led on.

A large Bible-reading on Tuesday morning at 10 o'clock, on "The Lord's Coming," was equally good. Praise the Lord!

Do I need to say, Be sure and don't let business, house-arranging, or meetings hinder, or shorten, *the daily, quiet heart-time* WITH GOD.

Ever yours affectionately "*in Christ*,"

The operations of the Spirit among gathered saints a blessed reality.

London, N., 10/7/96.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

Could anything but the presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit account for the way in which we were led at Ballymena, one after the other, and for the profit that all were conscious of receiving? What life and harmony and light He gave us on the Tuesday morning, and what a happy day we had at your house! Truly He is good; "His work is honourable and glorious."

Oh, dear brother, if we only yielded ourselves up to Him *each moment*, what could He not make of us and do with us!

The part of my Irish service that I enjoyed least was an address I gave in Belfast the evening before I left. I offered it without being asked, perhaps without God's guidance. I got noisy and dry as I went on, and felt my soul out of sorts after it was over, and all the next day. But when I got face to face with God, and told it all out, everything became right. Write soon and tell me how you are, and everything that you know will interest me regarding your service for the Lord and your family, and the Christians all over the neighbourhood.

Yours affectionately in Christ,

The sweetest description of God.

London, N., 10/7/96.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I received your letter giving an account of your Willie's death, when I was in Ballymena. It must have

greatly tried both you to dictate it, and your wife to write it. I feel grateful to you for giving me so many particulars, and for unbosoming yourself so freely as you did.

I trust, as time has gone on, the Lord has been comforting your hearts. Our Lord was specially anointed with the Holy Spirit "to heal the broken-hearted." He who has a broken limb puts it into the hands of a doctor for healing ; the pain at first may distract him, and make him feel at a loss what to do ; but when he collects his senses he sends for the doctor. I gather from your letter that you were at first stunned and confused when this crushing blow came on your heart as a father. But no doubt before this you have called in the only Healer. There is no one else to send for, no one else able to give relief, and no one else loving us enough to take the necessary trouble.

I might write down a score of arguments for submission, and topics of comfort ; but to what profit ? When your heart gathers itself into the sanctuary, and quiets itself to hear His voice, you will get more comfort in five minutes than men's best talk could give you in hours.

David, in Ps. lxxiii., tells us how things looked to him outside the sanctuary, and how differently they looked when he went inside. I am expecting a similar story from you. Yes ; I feel assured that to the record of this sorrowful chapter of your life you will add this postscript, as to so many less sorrowful ones before it, "For He is good ; for His mercy endureth for ever."

The sweetest description of God to us is, as you know, "*He that spared not His own Son*"; so that He knows what you feel. Write me soon, and tell me of the Lord's dealings with your soul in these trying days.

Yours affectionately in Christ,

The best hour for God.

London, N., 20/7/96.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

Thank God for all the joy He gave me among you. Tell the brethren not to forget my counsel about taking an hour, or if that is not possible, *half* an hour, daily, to gather themselves into God's presence and meditate on His character, especially *His love*; the *liveliest* hour or half hour in the day if they at all can. We must not offer God the lame or the blind. If thoughts wander, as they will, that is something to tell Him about and get help against. Persevere; He is sure to help; that is one thing the Holy Spirit has come for.

My kind remembrances to M——; tell J—— he little knows how dear he is to God.

My loving salutations in the Lord to ——; but I cannot go over all; the 16th of Romans would not be long enough. My love to ALL.

Yours affectionately *in Him*,

The Comforter has come.

London, N., 16/11/96.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

Death is reaping old and young, high and low. We are waiting every hour to hear of Henry Dyer's home-going.

Through mercy I am very happy in my service for the Lord, and still more in Himself. He is fairer than the sons of men: grace is poured out (out of a heart full of it) into His lips. God has blessed Him for ever. What an honour and joy to serve One who so perfectly loves us, and who served, and still serves us, so well!

Have you thought much of the work of the Holy Ghost of late? I have found it an immensely profitable subject of inquiry, meditation, and prayer. I don't mean the doctrine or theory of it, but the getting it all made real in one's heart, which surely is what God means for us.

Affectionately yours in Him,

God's love and faithfulness.

London, N., 24/12/96.

MY DEAR MRS. —,

I often think of you, and oftener pray for you and your children. Allow me now to write you a few lines conveying my love in the Lord Jesus, and my earnest wishes for your own welfare, and for that of your dear children, both in time and in eternity.

I hope never to forget the long-continued love and kindness of your dear husband; and God will never forget his services to His people. *Be assured* He never will; and He will not forget his widow and children. It was a great joy to me when last in — to see some of the dear children already walking in their father's footsteps of faith in Christ. May they *all* be joined to the Lord, and kept lowly in heart, and faithful! "HE IS ABLE."

I trust you are stronger than when I saw you in June, and that your heart is kept resting in the unalterable love and faithfulness of God. You have never yet known the tenth part of His love for you. "Thou hast loved them," Christ said, "as Thou hast loved Me." Can you think how the Father loves His Eternal Son? He loves you *with the same love*.

"But He has tried me sorely." True; but "whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth." James tells us to count

it all joy when we fall into divers trials. How otherwise could we learn what God is to us; how patient He is, and kind, and sympathising—in one word, *Fatherly*?

May He be with you continually. Turn often to your own heart, and there seek Him; “I will dwell *in them* and walk in them.” I will be very glad to hear how you get on.

Yours affectionately in Christ,

Oneness of heart with Christ brings calmness in the hour of trial.

London, N., 23/1/97.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

Is it not wonderful that, as a son of the living God myself, I am writing a letter to another son of the same Father? Is it not equally wonderful that both of us cost that Father the life of His Eternal Son, to redeem us from our sins, and bring us to Himself? and that He so loved us that He did not shrink from making the sacrifice? But a *more* wonderful thing still is this, that we should ever doubt such a love or distrust such a God!

May I suggest whether, in the way in which you speak and feel about the removal of your dear boy to be with the Lord, you shew that perfect trust in God, and that perfect submission to His holy will, that such love deserves?

It is quite true that *I* have never been so tried. But there is George Müller, who lost *an only son*, then *his wife*, then *an only daughter*, and who had all the fury of the — division mainly against himself; yet, solitary and slandered, he has nothing but words of submission and confidence in God to utter; so far as I remember, in his biography and reports, there is not a murmuring

word. Bear with me, but I dread lest your soul should suffer, and lest further trial from a loving Father be provoked.

Your dear boy is *under God's care* instead of *yours*. And, if you are kept one in heart with Christ, what great harm do the misunderstandings of a few poor Christians do you ?

I think I am partly led to write this by reading yesterday in 1 Peter, "Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time."

I have seen a few conversions ; there are some ; but, as I said, few. I fear there is a lack of deep personal piety among us, and little persevering prayer in the Holy Ghost.

I am, dear brother, yours affectionately in Christ,

There is no happiness like being alone with God.

London, N., 23/1/97.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I ought sooner to have thanked you for the cheer of your last letter, written, I see, nearly a month ago. A letter from you differs from one coming from many another. It is fragrant with the recollections of many years of brotherly fellowship and kindness, and it has always that in it which first drew us together—the life we have in common in our risen Head.

When you wrote you had been in but poor health for some days ; I trust that long before this you have quite recovered. In my frequent prayers for you I put your soul first, then your health, then your family, then your service for God. May you get rich answers in all four.

How good God has been in regard to the little company

of Christians who meet with you ! I was glad to get cheering news of those who gather at W——. I sometimes wonder how things go on at other places that I used to visit. I know that the true state of things at Ballymena can hardly be gathered from what they appear when I visit them ; but I gather from our brother Walbran's letters that a measure of life and of gospel activity is preserved among them.

We have many things here to bless God for ; and many to keep us humble. I have not been at Clapton Hall this month on the Lord's-days, but at St. George's Hall, and am greatly enjoying my work there. It is used on week nights for concerts, etc., and on Lord's-days, morning and evening, for meetings. Denham Smith began the work. The congregations are not so large as they were in his day, but still a goodly number gather when they get something to feed their souls.

I visit other places through the week, and houses nearly every day for two hours or so. My happiest time—though *all* is happy—is the time I spend alone with God in this little room. The Lord's-day evenings and Thursday evenings of February I am to spend in Enfield.

I write all this, though you know little of the places, (1) to let you see how good God is in keeping doors open for me and giving me the strength required to enter into them ; and (2) to shew you how truly I need the continuance of your prayers on my behalf.

Yours affectionately "*in Him.*"

The perfect love of God is the only rest of the heart.

Finhaut, Switzerland, 7/6/97.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I know you will be interested in hearing from me in this far-away corner of the world. The kindness of friends, when it was known that I was recommended by the doctors to come here, at once provided for my expenses in travelling, so that I was free from anxiety in that matter, and it was a part also of God's kind guidance in my path.

We have been helped at every step (Mrs. Scott, Mary, my wife, and myself), and have been kept in much unity of judgment and heart. We travelled through France, and spent two nights in Geneva, where we visited the cathedral in which Farel occasionally and Calvin regularly preached, and other interesting places in that beautiful city.

We then came to Glion, a lovely place at the head of the lake of Geneva, and about 1,200 feet above it, i.e., 2,400 feet above the sea. We stayed there eight days. To our surprise, the first day when we dined in the hotel there, two persons, husband and wife, accosted us; *he* had heard me preach in London, and her mother and sister knew me well. They were both dear Christians. The next day two old friends came up from Vevey (a town on the lake near by), one English, the other Irish, who had heard of my arrival. Then followed a son of Mr. Wm. Hake's, of Barnstaple. So that "He who setteth the solitary in families," had put us in a circle of friends, when we expected to be quite alone. They shewed us *much* love.

The only fault Glion had was that it was too hot, high

as one might think it, and perhaps the herbage was too luxuriant; otherwise, if I had wished an earthly paradise, I could choose none lovelier. But it was not to see beautiful places I came here, but by God's blessing to get braced, and to have my head strengthened; and thinking a cooler place likelier to answer these ends, we left Glion on Saturday for this place. The railway brought us in a little over an hour along the edge of the Rhone to a place called Vernazay. From that the ascent up here was the steepest and giddiest I have ever travelled. The mountains seem to rise up like a wall along the Rhone valley, and at first it would appear impossible that any road could be made up such a steep, and especially that any vehicle could ascend it. We crossed in zigzags a torrent foaming down the face of it over forty times. I never saw such a road; other parts of the way were not much less steep; it ran along the edges of high mountains overlooking deep valleys. The nerves were quite strained during the four hours it lasted, but we got safely here at last, wearied, but delighted with the journey.

What a place this is! It is shut in among great mountains, only gorges between them allow free circulation of air: one right before us is 12,000 feet high, another 10,000, others 8,000 and 6,000. A fine glacier stretching for miles lies between two of them. We are over 4,000 feet above the sea. The air is pure and fresh as balm, and already we have all gained by it. For myself I have not felt so well for months. The clouds that obscured my head seem giving way, and my heart is happy in the perfect love of God.

For it is there, and not in fine scenery, that the heart finds its rest. The two Christian friends who came and spoke to us at Glion are following us here. We look for

them to-night ; and, I trust, we shall all help one another to maintain and advance in communion with God.

Yours ever in Christ,

We have God.

Grindelwald, Switzerland, 24/6/97.

DEAR FRIEND,

Let me again thank you for the kindness that made our brief stay in your beautiful city so pleasant and interesting. I *did* so much enjoy meeting you again. On Sunday we had one constant downpour of rain, and these mountains were lost in gloom. But we had God, and we betook ourselves together to prayer. On Monday there was not a cloud, nor has there been since. The place is magnificent ! At present I am rather feeble through cough and sore throat, and consequent loss of sleep. But again we have God, and in His good time all will pass away. If we pass through Berne, and your engagements permit, a shake-hands at the railway station will be very pleasant.

Redemption glories surpass creation beauties.

Brunnen, Switzerland, 6/7/97.

MY DEAR MRS. ———,

I heard with much sorrow how ill you had been before you left England. If God who rules over all were not our Father, if His wisdom were not unerring, if His love were not perfect, this would be very dismal news. But He will let nothing hurtful be put into the cup which He gives His child to drink ; and He is "the One who hears prayer." May He keep your heart in perfect peace

through faith in Him, and give your dear husband the great joy, when he reaches you, of finding you steadily recovering the ground you have lately lost !

It is good of God to have made a country so beautiful, for weary and delicate people to come to for rest and recruiting. But how much the fine air and scenery are surpassed by the peace of God in the heart, and by the revelation of His love opened up to us by the Holy Spirit ; I was greatly enjoying yesterday the description of the world (in Ps. viii. and Heb. ii.) as it is to be when Christ and His church are reigning over it, and thinking how far that will exceed this earthly paradise. Sickness is here, and death, *and sin*. Our hearts cry out, "Come, Lord Jesus !"

Believing heart-prayer indispensable for spiritual prosperity.

London, N., 19/7/97.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

The kindness of friends enabled my wife and myself to spend a time in Switzerland, where we much enjoyed the entire rest, and were refreshed by the fine scenery and pure air. I am much the better for it all, and hope to be able to go on a little longer in the dear old work.

I trust you are well, and kept abiding in Christ, and have Him with you in your work. I find more and more that *heart-prayer*, *believing* prayer, prayer that leans with absolute certainty on God, is the indispensable condition of soul-prosperity and of blessing in service. *Nothing* makes up for the neglect of it. I was in no little danger, when I was away from home, of failing in this.

Yours in *Him*,

The service of riper years.

London, N., 24/7/97.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I am once more among English-speaking people and glad to be quiet again in my own home. The entire break from all engagements and responsibilities for eight weeks, with the bracing air and novel scenes, was a great help to me, and I trust I have gained some lasting benefit. If it were God's will one would like even in old age to be still fit for some service. There are autumn and *winter* fruits on the tree of life, "to show that the Lord is upright." He promised *never* to leave us; He is "our God for ever and ever." So we are not going to lie useless in a corner, like "vessels in which He has no pleasure." We cannot and do not wish to do young men's work, hindering those who can. But we can do work that young men cannot do, and the Lord will give us wisdom to find it out and strength to do it.

Yours affectionately in Him,

When a good man sees the grace of God in others he is glad.

Lisburn, 9/8/97.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

After a happy meeting here in the morning to remember our Lord, I went up to Belfast to see something of the work our brother D. R. is carrying on there. He has a great circular tent put up in almost the centre of Belfast, holding quite 2,000 people. There were some hundreds present at the 4 o'clock prayer-meeting, and in the evening the tent was crowded, and I was told that a great many had to go away. There is a flat area,

and around it the seats rise up tier above tier. It was a fine sight to see that vast crowd, as still as they well could be, drinking in the solemn message that was delivered.

I do not know that I ever heard more solemn, arresting preaching. Coming judgment was announced, love proclaimed, Christ exalted, with the passion and authority of the deepest and heart-commanding conviction. Consciences were reached, and God was speaking to men's hearts. I do not know when I felt more thankful.

Yours ever,

Food for God's household.

London, N., 13/10/97.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I have often thought of you since I last saw you, and have brought your varied service for the Lord, and your soul-conflicts, and your family circumstances, so far as I knew them, before our gracious, heavenly Father, and besought help for you. And I am longing to hear how in all respects He is dealing with you.

You will have heard about the unusually wide door for the Gospel which God gave me this last time in Ballymena, for which I have heartily thanked Him. I cannot help thinking that God is giving to the people in the North of Ireland a willingness to hear, and I feel emboldened to ask Him to send out men filled with the Holy Ghost and faith to speak to them. Let us unite in this.

After leaving Ireland I spent some days in the North of England in the Lord's service, and then went for two or three days to D——, where we had a time of refreshing from God. Then I returned to Glasgow, and stayed with

Mr. T. C., who, with his family, received my wife and me, not into their home merely, but into their hearts.

The meetings on Monday were large, and on the whole spiritual and good. A great part of the first meeting was taken up by —, who brought out clearly and impressively the very imperfectly known truth of Rom. vi., that is, the *crucifying*, the *reckoning dead*, etc.

The afternoon was usefully spent over John xv.—on abiding in Christ and bearing fruit. I was not present in the evening.

On Tuesday morning we had a very good time together in the small hall, and the afternoon meeting in the large hall was on 2 Cor. iv. 10, "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus." Much was said that was practical and useable for the consciences and hearts of Christians. There was nothing of the hard tone we have sometimes heard, but the teaching was food for God's whole household.

Yours in Him,

We may trust Christ's faithful heart still.

Charlton, Bognor, 3/1/98.

BELOVED BROTHER,

I have just written my first letter this new year to — and I naturally turn next to you to send you my hearty greetings. May you be kept all through the year closely following the guidance and enjoying the constant care of the Shepherd and Bishop of your soul!

If you and I could look back and see our lives since the time we first met exactly as He sees them, whose eyes are as a flame of fire, I wonder how we would think and feel. I have been trying to-night to do that with

mine. Alas! Alas! When I looked forward from 1859 I little thought these thirty-eight years would be what I now see them to be. "O wretched man that I am," is all I can say.

Yet—and this is not strange to you—I feel no despondency as I write. 'I have an Almighty Friend—your Friend too—alive at this moment, who so loves me that He died for me. HE has been faithful through all, and I know I may trust that faithful heart still. He knew me when He chose me; and after all He has seen in me, He chooses me still.

Like many that went before it, last year has been full of ups and downs. What will 1898 look like, if we are left here till the close of it, and look back?

"*I will trust, and not be afraid.*" We may use the last words boldly, if we are helped to carry out the first; that is what my past experience makes me tremble about. "*I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not,*" is our Lord's word, so that, thank God, our faith is in His care too.

I was struck to-day with those words to the Church of Ephesus, "Do the *first* works." They do not appear to have declined in the amount or "patience" of their works; but like some of us in our preaching, breaking of bread, etc., they went on with their old works out of habit; and Christ missed the fresh love in which those works had been steeped at first.

I am putting down rather unconnectedly the thoughts that rise in my heart as I write. I know you understand me, and that we like each other to talk out freely what is uppermost.

Yours in Him,

We have an Overseer of our souls.

*

Charlton, Bognor, 4/1/98.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I am writing my first letters this year to the old friends of former years ; I thank God that some of them are still left. It is now over thirty-eight years since we first knew each other. I would not have believed anyone then that they would be such years as I see them now when I look back on them. Alas ! alas ! what unbelief and self-will and uselessness ! And yet I had an Overseer for my soul all the time, if I had only consulted Him and followed His guidance ! Thank God we have Him still. May we this year be kept awake to His presence, and careful in obeying Him !

Yours affectionately in Him,

God Himself the resting place of faith.

London, N., 21/4/98.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

My ability for service is diminishing. But God's love is the same. He does not forget His old servants. Just before going out to the meeting the news of the utter destruction by fire, in less than two hours, of dear old Spurgeon's tabernacle reached us. I could almost have wept for grief. But God has His purpose in it, and if we pray and wait we shall see.

Seventeen or eighteen missionaries left for Africa last week, with no society at their back, but trusting Him who sends them. May they prove truly sent ones, and may their faith be sustained !

What a fine close God gave George Müller ! No

struggle ; no pain ; " he was not, for God took him." And what a life !

Yours affectionately in ^{*}Him,

Content with the Lord's presence.

Charlton, Bognor, 10/5/98.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

It is hard in these days to keep the narrow way to the end—to own the Body of Christ with all its variety of members and gifts, and to be content with His presence to guide in our assemblies. Why not have a king like the other nations ? or *be* a king one's self ?

Yet let us be pitiful to brethren possibly perplexed and tempted by the weakness, disorder, and failures of different kinds, in too many assemblies. Still, departing from God's ways is no remedy ; it is merely another and on the whole a worse evil.

Yours in our Lord Jesus Christ,

What a patient Friend God is !

London, N., 25/5/98.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I was reading this morning about David, when he became King, proposing to build a house for God, without God's asking him to do it, and how he was told that God would build *him* a house, and that he was a *servant*, not to do things at his own will, but to do as he was bidden. And David's answer to God shews with what genuine humility of heart he accepted the rebuke, and went back to his true place as a servant.

Does not this teach us a lesson ? Zeal to do great things

for God is not what He wants, but obedience. He would have us content to do what He gives us strength for—a thing I am slow to learn—and to dwell more on what He does for us than what we do for Him. And how well worth dwelling on is what He does for us !

I *often* pray for you. It is astonishing how little we take advantage of the liberty of asking, which God gives us. If I had in this room beside me a friend who perfectly loved me, whose resources were without limit, and who was pleased with me best when I asked him most, what a time he would have with me ! I can fancy him smiling at my endless string of requests, and saying, “Go on, my friend, don’t fear to weary me—is there anything more I can do for you ? It delights me to see how you trust my friendship and make use of me.”

Alas ! I *have* such a Friend here beside me ; and this is *not* what passes between Him and me. I ask for little ; I ask timorously and half-heartedly ; I hardly expect to get what I ask ; and I am often surprised when it comes. What a *patient* Friend He is !

Yours affectionately in Him,

Paradise restored.

London, N., 20/6/98

MY DEAR E.,

We go on quietly from day to day as if we were in a quiet village in the country. We are seldom in what is called London, having no business to do there as a rule, and not caring for its rushing crowds and what strangers call its sights. We have found that the secret of happiness does not lie in surroundings, but in knowing God’s love

and doing His will. The pretty little hymn is about true :

“Trust and obey,
There's no other way
To be happy with Jesus
Than trust and obey.”

One can do that in crowded London and anywhere. A trusting heart and a surrendered will—cottage or castle makes no difference—give us paradise restored. Judas found hell by Christ's side; the poor repentant woman found heaven in the house of the proud Pharisee who scorned her and scoffed at her; and Paul could sing in a prison cell. Is not the one whose will is in harmony with God's always in God's bosom?

Lovingly yours in Him,

The body weary, but the heart full of quiet and sunshine.

Ballater, N.B., 5/7/98.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

It had got known in Aberdeen that I was passing that way, and I was invited, and consented (by telegram) to spend the Lord's-day there. We were most kindly entertained, and were received by the brethren with a most cordial welcome. In the morning we broke bread in Windsor Place Room, and in the afternoon from 400 to 500 Christians crowded the room where brethren meet in St. Paul's Street, and the Lord gave me a message for them, which I trust was helpful. In the evening I preached the Gospel in Windsor Street Room to as many as it would hold. From the walking to and fro, and the preaching, I was very tired at night, and slept little afterwards, *but I had quiet and sunshine in my heart.* Last night here I

had splendid sleep, and this morning feel famously well.

Yours very truly in Christ Jesus,

"A day in Thy courts is better than a thousand."

London, N., 26/7/98.

MY DEAR MRS. —,

If I held the rod I would lay it very lightly on your shoulders, and probably spare you altogether ; but therein I should shew how far inferior my wisdom and love are to those of our heavenly Father. With Him bodily health and comfort are secondary things. The soul, the heart, the inner man, is what He aims at perfecting and keeping in health. And we learn to agree with Him entirely in this aim, and to leave Him to choose what means He thinks best in accomplishing it. "As Thou wilt." "Not my will but Thine be done."

He has chosen us for Himself, and how much more you have learnt of Him, how much closer you have been drawn to Him, through your long continued weakness.

One hour spent in the sanctuary, listening to His voice, pouring out our soul-secrets to Him, is worth a year, yes, many years of ordinary life. Is it not ? Some old Roman, after an evening spent in high, intellectual society, wrote of it, "*vixi*," "I have lived." May we not say it far more truly after such an hour with God ? What will heaven be with a "spiritual body," and that word fulfilled, "Then shall I know even as also I am known" ?

At our happy gathering around the Lord at Clapton Hall to-day, we had a most delightful time. What was said was mostly from the Scriptures, to which one after another was manifestly guided by the Holy Spirit, so as

to throw light on the Person, and work, and glories of Christ.

We unite in much love and warmest good wishes.

Lifeless correctness is not enough.

Dundee, 3/9/98.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

Seldom has my heart been more stirred than in hearing — ; and there is fresh, solid truth in what he gives forth as well as moving appeals. On the one hand I would gladly see him dispense with some of the things you refer to. But they are rather doubtful than evil ; and on the other hand we must take into account the good, and own how much it preponderates. *Lifeless* correctness is surely infinitely less precious ; and you know how much of *that* there is everywhere.

I reached this place yesterday, and have not yet settled how long I remain. *But I am a servant*, and am waiting for the Master's guidance.

I think if the prayer-meeting grew in power, it would before long grow in numbers. "*God is able.*"

Yours affectionately in Christ,

Love triumphs where self-seeking is defeated.

Dundee, 13/9/98.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

During my long absence I have thought and prayed and considered much whether, if there were more love and hearty unity among us, there might not be more blessing given us of God. And that has led me to judge my own ways carefully, and my share of responsibility

for any want of perfect oneness. Let us see what yieldingness and love will do to set anything right that still needs rectifying. Perhaps this will prove to be the way by which we may gain what we have both longed and prayed for—increased power and blessing from God in our fellowship and work.

Yours in Him,

Christ glorified yet dependent on God.

London, N., 9/11/98.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I could groan over my poor state of soul, but I know you would justly say, "Why groan that you have only two pence in your purse, and both of them counterfeit, when you have a million lying to your credit in the bank? It is really expecting too much from the patience of your friends when you ask them to listen to such folly." Yes: and that is the real state of things; I will not therefore give your patience so needless a task; but I will rebuke myself with a text, "How is it that you have no faith?" and save *you* the trouble of doing it.

I have been meditating this morning a good deal on Ps. xxi.—a psalm about the King—and full of interest I found it. I was much struck with these words, "For the King trusteth in the Lord." Crowned with go'd, endless life, glory and majesty, most high for ever; and yet He "*trusteth in the Lord*"—in His glory as well as in His days of trial and humiliation.

How is it that to live a life of faith is a thing so hard to learn and so easy to let slip?

I was much interested in your account of the fellowship meeting with its lights and shadows. You remember it is in connection with man's tongue that it is written,

“The goodness of God endureth continually.” Ah me ! how much pretence there often is in the claim to be guided by the Holy Spirit ! Are the gifts *there* for which freedom is so loudly claimed ?

Yours affectionately in Christ,

The wonderfulness of the love of Christ.

London, N., 21/11/98.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I hope you are well in soul as well as in body, and that notwithstanding discouragements and difficulties you are helped to go on patiently in your service for the Lord, and that you work in the cheering light of His face.

Yesterday I spent a peculiarly happy day. I meet a few spiritual men where I go, with whom it is delightful to have heart communion. But I fear the bulk are different. Alas ! I am often different myself.

I have been partly shamed and partly helped by considering the wonderfulness of the love of Christ, and the need of giving ourselves, with much watchfulness over our hearts, wholly up to that love.

Yours in Christ,

The blessedness of the unoffended.

London, N., 27/12/98.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

God is faithful, who hath called us into the fellowship of His Son.

John the Baptist must have been sorely tried when he heard of Christ healing the sick, and even raising the dead, while he was yet left in prison, at the mercy of a

licentious and cruel tyrant. We too are tempted many a time to think it strange that the Lord, being Almighty, does not use His omnipotence to help us more than He does. But blessed is he who does not stumble at His dealings. John knows His reasons now; we shall soon.

I am getting old, and often feeling it, but He remains the same. Pray that my faith fail not in my old age.

Yours affectionately in Christ,

Who can understand his errors, or God's love?

London, N., 27/12/98.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

"I know the thoughts that I think towards you," saith the Lord, "thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an expected *end*." We are not looking for all our good things *here*, like Master Passion in the Allegory. We get some; we get many; as He sees best; but THE good things are coming in the morning, and, like Master Patience, we are going to wait for them. His word and His oath make their coming sure.

I am saying these things to you, because I need to say them to myself. I find that I am still very legal, secretly seeking for the grounds of comfort in myself, instead of from what I see in God.

And when I see what is wrong in myself, instead of distrusting *myself* because of it, I wickedly distrust God. "Who can understand his (own) errors?" and who can understand *His* love? I am learning more of what Paul meant when he said, "In this we groan, being burdened . . . earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with

our house which is from heaven." Christ is "THE COMING ONE."

All loving wishes to all.

Yours affectionately in Christ,

God will use us for His name's sake.

London, N., 27/2/99.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

How much I would have enjoyed being with you ; but God's will is always best. I had my own work to do here, and doubtless was better at it than at what might have seemed to me the greatest treat elsewhere.

I trust God will make much use of you in Ireland. Do you know any reason why He should not ? Your weakness is none, but rather His opportunity. Your sins need not be any. Are there any of them you have not judged and confessed and got forgiven ? Are there any from which you are not honestly willing to be saved ? Are there any from which He is not able to save you ? And may you not be sure, nay, are you not sure, that He **WILL** save you from them ? Then your sins are no hindrance to His using you. And—to put the finishing touch to my questioning—are you not sure in your heart that for His own name's sake He *will* use you for His glory ?

The unity of the Body of Christ.

London, N., 8/3/99.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

You spoke the other day of some difficulties by which you had been beset, but which had past away, and which you found to be "mere bubbles." I have wondered

whether those difficulties were connected with different views which brethren among us hold as to our ground, in this day of division, among the children of God.

Early "Brethren," as you know, discerned amid all the brokenness of Christendom the unity of the body of Christ, owning its members wherever they found them. When they gathered in the name of the Lord Jesus, and claimed His presence in their midst, they had no thought of separating from their fellow-members in Christ's body who remained in "the sects of Christendom." They received them at the Lord's-table, owning indeed that they had as good a right to be there as themselves, the Lord Himself being the Host, and all whom He invites and receives being welcome.

Many, myself among them, keep this old ground still. We learn from the verse, "We, being many, are one bread and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread," that at the Lord's-table it is not the unity of the local assembly that is set forth, or the unity of those who have the same judgment as to separation and mode of worship, but *the unity of the body of Christ*; and that the table ceases to be the Lord's-table, and becomes the table of a sect, if there is not a place at it for every member of Christ's body. Of course scriptural discipline for fundamentally unsound doctrine or evil living is another question.

Others, as you know, separate, not only from "sects," but from Christians in "sects," and refuse in any practical way to own them. *In theory* they admit that the Holy Ghost has made them one—that they have the same life, the same hope, the same Father—but *in practice* they refuse to own their oneness with them in any way.

Now I have heard it said that your sympathies have

been to a large extent with the latter of these two schools, and when I heard what you had said at — I hoped that it was on this point you had been exercised, and that in common with many who formerly held these “narrower” views, you had been led by the Spirit of God to larger and wider views, and that you felt the joy of this when you spoke as you did.

If I have misjudged the views you have hitherto held, or am mistaken as to any change in them, I intreat you to forgive me. The kind way in which you speak of me in your letter emboldens me to write with something of the freedom of a father to a son.

Yours affectionately in Him,

“Not in word, but in power.”

London, N., 22/3/99.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

Thank you for correcting my mistaken impression that the words I referred to in my last letter were spoken by you in some address. I am glad the report led me to write to you, because it has brought your excellent and welcome letter in reply. I am also very glad that it was not a mere question of outward organization or “excision” that exercised you, but of spiritual power and life. Don’t suppose you have been alone in feeling these difficulties.

The line of separation between the spiritual and unspiritual is *far* from being identical with the line of separation between certain “meetings” and true Christians in “the sects.” *In my judgment the rock on which we are in danger of splitting is mistaking form, and what is well within the power of the flesh, for the manifestation of the Holy Ghost.*

Preaching the Gospel is not a mere fluent statement of certain propositions, reaching no one's conscience or heart. Again, "the manifestation of the Spirit" among saints, spoken of in 1 Cor. xii., is not a lifeless reading of a chapter, or a mere scriptural address with no "message" and no grip in it, nothing to bring them into contact with the heart of God, nothing to humble their hearts, and fill them with adoring thoughts of Christ.

The requisites for true fellowship with God's children are :—

(1) That care is taken that only *true* Christians are received ;

(2) That *all* of whom there is sufficient evidence that they are members of Christ are welcome ;

(3) That fundamentally false doctrine and evil living are kept out ; and

(4) That those gifted by the Spirit of God to profit their brethren by teaching, exhortation, etc., are free under the guidance of a present Lord to use their gifts for that end.

I groan in my spirit over the worldliness, the low standard of spiritual-mindedness, the stiffness and deadness in our meetings, as well as the lack of true evangelists; but these are not *established by law*, and there is a remedy for them. If I can get more of God in my own soul, and can be the means of helping a few others to get more of Him in theirs, there will be some abiding result.

Thank you for your tract. Much of it is excellent, but I wish you would reconsider what you say on the last point, *viz.*, about the "house." Surely in Eph. ii. the temple and the house are co-extensive. So they are in 1 Tim. : "The house of God, *which* is the church of the living God." Those who are described in 1 Cor. i. 1, as calling

on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ—"their Lord and ours"—are distinctly said to be genuine Christians. Peter speaks of "the house of God" as consisting only of the righteous. "Judgment must begin at the house of God," and "if the *righteous* (those of the house) scarcely be saved," etc. 1 Corinthians and other Scriptures teach us that saints here are judged of the Lord. Even in 2 Tim. ii, I question if the great house means anything else than the true Church in its earthly condition; for true believers may be, and often are, dishonourable vessels, unfit for the Master's use.

I write so much and so freely because my heart is drawn to you by seeing that you are not trying to lead saints off on a false scent, after mere outward forms, but that you long for the true and real in the sight of the God of truth and reality.

Yours in *Him*,

The heart with all its faults must ever be kept open to Christ.

London, N., 13/3/99.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I think I am getting busier as I get older, for which, however, I am glad. You remember the 92nd Psalm, about fruit in old age "to shew that the Lord is upright," and that He has not disappointed us, but has given us work to do for Him to the end.

You are never forgotten, and many prayers go up for you to our heavenly Father. I do not doubt that in some way or other they are being answered by Him who gives exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think. I trust He is giving you a good measure of health, and keeping your soul in life, *i.e.*, in the knowledge and enjoyment of His love.

I got Mr. M—— to send a parcel of the *Revival*, with the account of the beginning of the 1859 work in it, to you, and several to other brethren, as I wanted them circulated. May the Lord in His own unexpected way send us another awakening time! Is there desire enough in the Church, and value enough put on *the Name* in which we ask, to obtain this from God? However, that too must be His gift, for “a man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven.”

Tell your boys to keep their hearts with *all* their faults, open to Christ, and to trust His grace to forgive them and set them right.

Yours affectionately in Him,

What the poor hungry world misses.

London, N., 24/3/99.

MY DEAR ——,

What an unspeakable mercy to have a spring of joy in one's heart, that flows on when one's hair turns grey and the infirmities of years make themselves felt! If the poor hungry world—crying out, Who will shew us any good?—only knew what they miss when they turn their back on God and refuse to “retain Him in their knowledge!” They pay an awful price for that most deceitful of all Satan's baits—the indulgence of self-will. They fancy themselves free; yet they are slaves of lust and vanity and money, and miss all the treasures contained in the possession of that richest of all inheritances, God *Himself*.

Affectionately yours,

Our Master will not disgrace His character.

London, N., 12/5/99.

MY DEAR —,

Remember you are a young man beside me, and may have to stand by the flag some years after I become unable to hold it. I oftentimes feel feeble both in mind and body, but He in whom my strength is, and in whom I trust, remains faithful. Men are thought little of who get all the work they can out of their servants while they are young, and then cast them off when they get old and their strength fails. *Our Master* is not going to disgrace Himself by acting after this fashion towards us. We are both ready to own that we served Him poorly enough when we were young ; but —we cannot deny His grace—we *did* serve Him, and we can both bear witness that He has kept His promises to us, every one of them. We will not distrust Him now.

I see little fruit of my work now ; but the kind of fruit from work at my time of life is probably seen by the eyes of One only. Indeed fruit in the form of conversions, or even of saints exercised to learn and follow God's ways at any cost, is not very visible anywhere ; yet there is *some* of both sorts, and God is accomplishing His purposes.

You would be grieved to see the increasing ungodliness of our London "Sabbaths" ; the streets are crowded with cyclists and sellers of Sunday papers. Yet many are crying to God about it. Many, too, are deeply stirred up about the spread of Romish doctrines and practices in the Church of England. On all hands there is much to make us awake and pray and labour ; nothing to discourage us while God lives and is what He is.

Affectionately yours,

The flesh is in me ; but I am not in the flesh.

Isle of Man, 1/7/99.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

When I look back I wonder that I have been so careless in strengthening and keeping in health that most wonderful gift of God, the life of the risen Son of God implanted in my soul. How often I have starved and poisoned it, instead of nourishing it on the Word, and quickening and exercising it by believing prayer ! It is divine, or it would have come to an end long ago.

I have been thinking a good deal of late about two texts ; the one in Heb. iv. about " the Word of God . . . piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit ; " and the other, " It is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." Both at Leominster two weeks ago, and in Bishopsgate Street Conference here last week, most of our first meeting was given to self-searching and confession—surely a very needful and helpful thing. But I thought I observed a confusion in much of the confession, as if, after all, we were in the flesh, under law, and not in the Spirit ; not in the new creation, in a risen Saviour. It is a shame, a thing to be confessed with tears, that we, men in Christ, men who have the Holy Ghost in us, should in so many things give way to the flesh that we might well have denied and overcome. But, when confessed and forgiven, surely it is well to remember that 2nd passage, " It is no longer I," to rise above the flesh, and realize that we are in Christ and that sin is put away, and with divine help to live the new life into which God has brought us.

But what a sermon I have preached you, before I have asked you how your poor suffering body is, and Mrs. — and your children, and, I might add, your grandchildren,

for God has been good to you in letting you see your children's children ; and *very* good in saving your children, and calling so many of them to witness openly to Christ's saving power. May they be kept, and made always a comfort to you, and a blessing to many !

Since I began this letter, my wife and I have come, as I expected, to the Isle of Man. I don't know a creature here, and I fear it will be rather lonely. Still *God* is here ; and in some measure I have learned to make company of Him.

Do you remember Herbert Taylor ? He used to attend the Dublin meetings long ago ; he was married to Mr. J. Morley's niece, and was one of the trustees of Clapton Hall. A few weeks ago he had a stroke of apoplexy, and died the next day but one, never recovering consciousness. He was but 52 years of age—21 years younger than I. Whom will the great reaper gather next ? Thank God we are in Christ ; without a charge against us in the court of heaven, or in the court of our own conscience, and we have eternal life within us, so that to be absent from the body is, **THE NEXT MOMENT**, to be " present with the Lord," who loved us and gave Himself for us.

Yours ever in Him,

The chief glory of saints.

Ramsay, Isle of Man, 14/7/99.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

Two very precious brethren came yesterday some twenty miles, from the far end of the island, to see us, to the great refreshment of our spirits. It was *almost* the only bit of Christian fellowship we have had since we came here. As iron brightens iron so does a man the

countenance of his friend. I see you have lately lost one who often brightened yours. I also, of late, have lost several. Herbert Taylor was suddenly taken a few weeks ago; Mr. Fisher (F. S. Arnot's father-in-law) since I left home; and yesterday I heard of another, a dear brother of about 40, who was private secretary to Mr. Goschen, one of the secretaries of State, and likely to rise as time went on. But he is called higher still.

What a treasure God has given us in putting the very life of His Son into our souls! Was that what Christ meant when He said, "The glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them"? He could not mean *future* glory, for He immediately adds, "that they may be one, even as we are." That the Father dwelt in Him was Christ's glory when on earth; and is it not ours? Is it not *that* which makes us one with all saints? And in comparison with it, what would a seat on the proudest throne in Europe be?

Yours ever in Him,

From strength to strength in dependence on the Beloved.

Isle of Man, 15/7/99.

MY DEAR —,

What is meant by that word in the Psalms, "They go from strength to strength"? Is it that their strength grows as they advance? May you find this true each new year of your life, like that other word, "He that hath clean hands shall wax stronger and stronger."

The lovely picture in Canticles is very pleasant and very instructive—"Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness *leaning on her beloved?*" We are never

separate, never alone ; the new life we have in Christ is never an independent one ; it leans on Him.

Our much love,

Much patience needed in church matters.

Ramsay, 31/7/99.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

Let us see all the good we can in our brethren, and seek in love to win them from anything that we think the opposite. From the very nature of the Church of God, much, much patience is needed. What is done amongst some by clerical authority, and amongst others by popular vote, amongst *us* has to be accomplished in most cases by earnest, patient waiting on God, which has this advantage amongst others, that in waiting thus on God we not only get help with regard to our brethren, but get our own hearts searched.

Affectionate greetings,

Experience adds weight to testimony.

Ballymena, 1/8/99.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I hope it may be God's will to spare you to us many a day, to testify that the Lord is upright, and that you are not disappointed in Him. Young Christians have their place and work ; but their testimony has not the same weight as ours, who have proved God's faithfulness for many years.

I sometimes fear being left to become useless or burdensome ; but such fears I know to be one of many forms of unbelief, of distrust of God. *If He has no more need*

of me here, He will take me home. While He keeps me *here*, He will have something for me to do for Him, some use to make of me. I am His, and it is for Him to do as He will.

Yours ever in *Him*,

Fellowship with the Father and the Son.

London, N., Undated.

MY BELOVED SISTER IN CHRIST,

We had a very happy time in our native province. I met some who had been led, during some of my former visits, to put their trust in our Lord Jesus, and many to whom in earlier days I had been made a blessing welcomed us. Prejudices which used to keep people from coming to hear me have in many cases disappeared, so that the meetings were larger than I remember them on any former visit, and the Lord helped.

What a joy it is to speak well of Christ! and what a comfort that we have One to speak of who we are sure will never disappoint the highest expectations people may form of Him. I find that He satisfies my heart more and more, and that the one thing worth living for is to know Him better and serve Him more faithfully.

Since coming back to London I have been hindered from being much out of doors by a severe cold. This evening I had to ask Dr. Neatby to take the meeting for me. I managed to speak on Christ's love in the morning meeting on Lord's-day, and in the evening I preached on 1 John i.—fellowship with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. (1) The parties to this fellowship: God who is *Light* (v. 5), and we who have *sin in us* and have *committed sins* (vv. 8, 10). (2) How God has removed

the apparent impossibilities of such a fellowship, (a) by the incarnation of His Son (vv. 1, 2); (b) by His death, for in v. 7 we read of His *blood*, and that it cleanseth us from all sin. (3) How the fellowship is actually formed, *viz.*, by our confessing our sins and exercising faith in the blood shed for us (v. 9). This joins us to Christ and brings us into fellowship with God.

I had meant to shew (4) what the fellowship consists in: having God's nature; being God's children; having God's Spirit; living His life; exercising His love, etc., but had not time; so left the people to search these out for themselves; as I leave you, dear Sister, and a very enriching search it is sure to prove.

To-night I hope to be able to speak again, and purpose taking 1 John ii. for my subject. May the Spirit of God make the word searching and sanctifying!

Yours affectionately in our Lord Jesus,

Dark and stormy days bring Christ nearer.

London, N., 7/9/99.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

My visits to — and — were to me very pleasant, and I would fain hope were helpful to the Christians I met; but I fear that in neither place is there much profitable ministry for them when they assemble in their ordinary meetings.

We need men raised up of God, who stand in His council chamber and hear His words, then come out and deliver His messages, and who will have power and courage to repress unprofitable or hurtful talk. Difficult? Yes; But not impossible, seeing we have God.

In some places I think I have seen such men given and such things done. Why not again?

Yes; there are dark days, and even stormy days, appointed for us in our voyage; but they bring Christ nearer.

Yours affectionately,

Teaching them to observe all things.

London, N., 15/9/99.

MY DEAR —,

How does your gospel work go on? Do you baptize believers and teach them to gather on the first day of the week to break bread in remembrance of Christ? Outward ordinances are secondary things; still, as appointed by God, they are not to be neglected. As given by Him they are channels in which we may count upon His causing the living water to flow, even if some make them dry and useless, or worse.

“Take heed to thyself and to the teaching”; *thyself first*. “We will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the Word”; *prayer first*. If Christ is living in our hearts, if His life is in truth superseding ours, our preaching and teaching are bound to be helpful to the souls of others.

Yours affectionately,

The smile of the Master, the lonely servant's encouragement.

London, N., 13/10/99.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

Will you very heartily thank the beloved brethren in — for the kind and most welcome gift they have sent me, as aid in my service for the Best of masters.

I think I can truly say, that, valued as this gift is, as a sign of the love of those who send it, still more valued are the words of kind, brotherly appreciation that accompany it. Amid not a few things to discourage me, such words are a real cheer to my heart. It is quite true that with the conscious approval of the Master Himself, one can very well work on, even though, as Paul said, the more one loves the less he is loved in return. But the love of those whom one loves is very sweet, when God grants such a blessing.

May He have you and yours under His loving guardianship !

Yours in *Him*,

Faith takes hold of the grace that is in Christ.

London, N., 31/10/99.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

Your kindness puts me to shame. It was I who ought to have written to you, and indeed I often meant to write ; but I have not been very well for some time. I don't do much, but the little that I do is at times quite as much as I have strength for, and letters are put off. This is why you have not had one sooner.

I suppose I am realizing that, at 73, I am—to put it mildly—no longer young ; but what a mercy that I am not quite laid aside and useless as many at my age are. I have been able to preach every Lord's-day evening, and also to speak in the morning, since I came home at the end of August ; besides attending one, and sometimes more week-day meetings. And you know how much I was able to overtake when in Ireland in August. Generally however now, after a stretch of busy work, a reaction

follows. I am in a corner for a while, like the naughty children. Then that passes, and

“When my weakness leaneth
On His might
All seems right.”

Is it not an immense comfort that we do not need to be one bit stronger or wiser or better than we are ; but to see and own what we are, and lean more on God ? Our strength and wisdom and goodness are in Him. “Be strong *in the Lord*” ; HE “is made unto us *wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.*”

It is hard to escape self, hard to shake off legality, hard to comprehend the breadth, length, depth, and height of GRACE. We want to be better and stronger and wiser and brighter in ourselves, and shrink from claiming and using as our very own the holiness and wisdom and strength that are in Christ. When a certain king married a beggar girl, it would have ill become her to be sighing out, “Oh, that I was richer !” Was she too proud to use her husband’s purse ? Was she unwilling to be indebted to him ?

“The inner side of every cloud
Is bright and shining :
And so I turn my clouds about,
And always wear them inside out,
To show the lining.”

Yours — with love,

Chastisement the proof of our legitimacy.

London, N., 12/11/99.

BELoved BROTHER IN CHRIST,

I heard that you were, though weak, decidedly better, and that all anxiety as to the issue was over. Much

prayer was made on your behalf, and much thanksgiving, I am sure, has gone up to God for your recovery.

I am not sure, though people pray less for us when we are well, that we do not need prayer more then than when we are sick. We need patience more perhaps in the latter case ; but what a deal besides we need when we are well ! Often perhaps it is some need that God sees, when we are well, that leads Him to send the sickness.

One thing is sure, that is, that no chance ever happens to a child of God. Another sure thing is that chastisement is one of the proofs of our legitimacy. And a third sure thing is that "all things work together for good to them that love God."

I often prayed for you that from this illness you might gain such soul-help as would stay with you as long as you live, and now I say heartily "AMEN."

Accept greetings in the Lord, and believe me

Yours ever in Him,

The heart prepared for work.

London, N., 15/12/99.

MY DEAR —,

We were very glad to know that you are all enjoying good health in a climate so different from what you were used to, and which it was feared would prove rather sickly and enervating. Those who know it by experience will, I am sure, counsel you to take special precautions. In another sense than Tennyson meant, "evil is wrought by want of thought." An almost momentary neglect may produce irreparable mischief.

I am glad too that you are finding work to do for the Lord. Mr. Chapman once said to two young labourers

in the North of Ireland: "If you are ready for work, there will always be work ready for you." Keep your heart happy with God, and you will never be idle, and your work will never be unprofitable.

Two sons of —— are in South Africa, the scene of the present unhappy war. The Christian's comfort is that "God reigns." England may need a rebuke to her boastfulness, and a reminder of the forgotten God of hosts, for so far there has been hardly any (if *any*) public recognition of God by our ministers or generals or organs of public opinion. Perhaps disasters may bring men to their knees.

Yours affectionately,

Tribulation proves our kinship with the Heavenly Family.

London, N., 20/12/99.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

Many thanks for your letter of Nov. 30th, in which several things gave me joy—(1) That you had had strength before you wrote for both the morning and evening meetings. I take that as a sign of some decided improvement in your health, and I hope you have before you on earth yet many days' service for the Best of masters. (2) That there is an improvement in the meeting; if the central light is kept bright, or made brighter, the rays are sure to penetrate the darkness around. And (3) that you have reason to believe that at least one soul has been added to the Lord through the series of meetings you have been holding. When I think of my own case I see what the salvation of *one* soul means—one soul brought from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God. Gold could not bribe either you or me to go back, even if

we were able, to where we were before God's voice called us into life.

The sentence about having had heavy trials in your family goes to the other side of the account; and yet "whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth." These are the things that test faith, and prove whether we belong to the family with Bunyan's "Christian" at the head, or are of the seed of Mr. Pliable. Tribulation works stedfastness.

I have been a little up and down in health. But I serve a Master who lets me take care of my health when necessary, and who gives all the strength needed for all the service *He* requires.

Love to all.

The Church cannot get on without the Holy Ghost.

London, N., 26/12/99.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

Thank you for letting me know about the opening of your new Hall. My will would most heartily be to be with you; but I know that would not be God's will, and His is wiser and better.

Yes, I was present at the first meeting in Mid Wynd, not far from forty years ago. We gathered in great simplicity with, I think I may say, a measure of true-heartedness to God. We had no rules but our Bible, and no Master but Christ.

If I can recall the thoughts of our hearts at that time, they were something like these: (1) We were very much in earnest to have the Gospel preached and to see sinners saved; (2) Most of us had learned from Scripture that baptism should follow faith in Christ; (3) We saw, from Scripture also, that a number of God's children, few or

many, were free to "break bread" together in remembrance of Christ, without priest or clergyman; that the Spirit of God should be trusted to guide us when thus gathered; and that *all* true Christians should be welcomed. (If I do not mistake, Robert Annan was with us at that first meeting, and took the Lord's supper with us.)

I hope we have all learned a good many things from God since then, but I believe time has only deepened our conviction of the truth of these simple principles with which we began. Some of them are not popular; but faith in God gives courage to stand by truth, however many may oppose it, and we have found it good to buy and keep the truth at some cost.

But we have also found that these truths with which we started are of such a nature that the power of the Holy Spirit is needful to carry them out. When carnal Christians seek to act on them there is neither order nor profit, as, indeed, we have sometimes experienced. But is it any disadvantage that in order to keep our meetings orderly and profitable, those who gather must give diligence to be spiritually minded? The Church of God *ought not to be able* to go on without the Holy Spirit.

Yours ever in *Him*,

Grace, mercy, and peace to the last.

London, N., 28/12/99.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

The year is nearly at its close, and one begins to consider how it has been spent, and to look forward to the beginning of another.

How much evil has come out of the old spring of evil in our natures! How much good that we might have

enjoyed and done has through our carelessness and unbelief been missed ! How true God has been to the perfect grace with which He started us forty years ago !

I trust you and yours are well ; I wish you all in the best sense of the word, a happy new year. That does not mean a year free from trials of faith. Paul had trials beyond most, and yet who was happier ? It is the sense of God's presence and love, and the assurance of our fellowship with Christ, that, whether trials be few or many, make us, and keep us, truly happy.

Save a cold, I am very well, and, thank God, am happy in Himself and in His work. Grace, mercy and peace be with you.

Yours in *Him*,

J. G. M'VICKER.

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS.

Grace sufficient.

“My grace is sufficient for thee” stands true to-day and for ever, and so I am finding it out.

I can well believe that if I knew *all* your needs, I could indeed see what an opportunity God has in your case to magnify the riches of His grace. Well, dear brother, He *has* done it, and *will* do it. I am sure He has done it in my case, than whom no one could be needier in every way, and He delights to do it for us all.

The Sabbath Day.

Take all things from God—even the want of kindness in Christians—and draw more on the infinite resources in the Lord’s own heart. Carry *every* burden to Him. When you feel a strain, be assured *you* are attempting to do something you ought to get *Him* to do, or to carry some burden you ought to get *Him* to bear. It is *the Sabbath* day. Do no work and carry no burdens is the law of our position in Christ (Jer. xvii. 21, 22; Heb. iv. 3). Can we? Yes; the Holy Ghost is come; “I can do all things *in Him* who strengthens me.” “*With God* nothing shall be impossible.”

“Thy will be done!”

I heard with concern some time ago of the death of your baby. You and Mrs. — may be assured of

being remembered with much sympathy, and even from a poor, feeble fellow-Christian that is something ; but the believer's great comfort is that in all his sorrow he is sure of the sympathy of his Father and his High Priest in heaven, and he also enjoys in his heart the presence of *the Comforter*, the blessed Holy Spirit. *He* will long ago have shewn you God's love and wisdom in what He has done, and taught you to submit humbly and thankfully to His holy will.

The servant's joy.

I cannot tell you how great my joy has been in seeing how well the brethren in Ballymena have got on without me. It was no small joy to Paul that he could write to the Philippians, " now *much more* in my absence." Some are like a bow-string : as long as a strong hand pulls it, it is stiff ; but it slackens at once when the hand is withdrawn.

Praise God, it has not been so in Ballymena. Say so, with my love, to any of the brethren you see.

Sharper than any two-edged sword.

I trust you will use the Word of God with much power. I was greatly struck yesterday with what a man who was using it in faith said about it. " He knew," he said, " that it must either cut sin from the soul, or cut both soul and sin from God."

I was glad to hear of your refreshing time with three precious children and servants of the Most High God. Perhaps your sense of deadness of soul afterwards was intended to help you in dealing with the low state of things which I am sorry to hear you find at C——. May the Lord have mercy on them and revive them !

Our confidence in grace alone.

I am kept occupied in various ways in the Lord's work in and around London : but sorely need increased power of the Holy Spirit both for holier living and for more effectual service. "The name of the Lord" is often the only barrier between me and despair. But what stronger barrier could one have or wish for? He drew us from all other confidences to trust in His grace; He put the blood of His Son on us : if He were to abandon us now, His name would be dishonoured for ever !

What beasts we are ever to distrust Him !

Pardon all this talk about myself. I suppose everyone has his ups and downs, if they thought it worth their while to talk of them. They are some of the opportunities we have for learning the faithfulness of our unchanging God. What beasts we are ever to distrust Him ! Half the time we don't believe He is on a throne of *grace* ! When we are in no pressing need of mercy we can believe in it famously. But how little we believe in it when we need it most ! We obstinately look for some cause for the mercy in ourselves, and when we can find none, we are so reluctant to ascribe it all to the precious blood !

The Truth abides however men fail.

In many meetings of Christians, where the presence of the Lord and His guidance of the worship by His Holy Spirit are held in *theory*, they are very poorly and imperfectly carried out in *practice*. At the same time, surely, it is *thus* that church meetings are described in the New Testament, and men's failures ought not to make us give up God's truth.

I am sorry therefore that you are away from the reach of a meeting where at least scriptural order and the liberty of the Spirit are not set aside by any regulation of men.

The Church remains one.

From the first the Church to me has been *one*, including all who are through faith joined by the Holy Spirit to *the One Head* in heaven. Outwardly these are now broken up and confused; but God sees and owns them as one, and I would humbly seek to do so also. Of course scriptural discipline is not to be overlooked, but that is another question.

The secret of a light burden.

I trust you are accepting God's ordering in this matter and not permitting yourself to judge. That was why our Lord found His burden light; He was meek and lowly in heart; He took as best what the Father sent Him.

The quiet place inside our hearts the place of communion.

Every once in a while think, in *the quiet place* inside your heart, "God is my Father, and His Son Jesus Christ died for me and is my Saviour—how He loves me! How well off I am! What can I do to please Him?" While the fine Highland air braces your body, *that* will sweeten and brighten you inwardly, and make you "croon" happy little songs within.

God's place in our hearts.

Tell me how you are and how in all respects you get on. Getting God deeper into the heart is the secret of holiness, peace, joy, contentment and strength.

A heart at rest makes work easy.

I have been kept very closely occupied since my return, and am likely to be for some time to come. How good God is in giving me so much pleasant work to do ! I enjoy it greatly, and there is no weariness. A heart at rest and perfectly satisfied makes work easy. And how can a heart be less than satisfied with God ? Mine is fully, and only longs to know Him better.

To discover our own faults a difficult business.

I find that my heart needs quite as much care as my body, and that when the former is right the latter is all the better for it. The discovery of one's faults is a difficult business ; but it seems a pity to suffer, both in one's happiness and one's service, by faults being allowed, which, if they are only found out and owned, can be so easily forgiven and cured. I have spent a good deal of time of late in this work, and find it pays well. Only my heart keeps its hand tight shut on a good many of its secrets, and it is hard to get it opened and to bring them out to the light. "I the Lord search the heart." So we must humbly seek His help.

God sitteth as King for ever.

The whole country is on tiptoe about the approaching election ; our comfort is that the issue is in the hands of *God*. He may chastise the nation for her sins by allowing evil measures to pass and evil men to triumph ; but even then it is well, for all things certainly work together for good to them that love God.

A way of escape in every trial.

I have often thought of your letter and of your present situation, which is not a little embarrassing. But no difficulty is too great for God to help us out of. Is not that the meaning of the promise in 1 Cor. x. 13, that in all trials He will provide a way of escape? So be assured that, in due time, He will do this for you in the present difficulty, as He has done in others.

If I had the means I could make it all easy enough for you; but I can often do little more than advise, and what God has ordered is best.

God's unspeakable Gift.

To me also God has been very good. But what else could He be? Love can only act like Love. What an infinite mercy to have one for our Father for ever whose very nature is Love, and who has almighty power to carry out on our behalf all that His heart dictates! He gave His Son. All His other gifts, however needful, however precious, however welcome, however calling for thanks—what are they after this Gift?

"All His benefits."

"What mercies has He made me prove" all these sixty-two years! and they are getting greater. I do not think I *ever* had a happier or as happy a birthday. Not a regret, or a burden, or a fear; *such* a retrospect, such a portion now, and such a hope!

Christ our only wisdom.

Do not forget me in prayer. I have often more need of guidance and wisdom than many would suppose,

Jesus Christ is our wisdom : but alas ! we are sorely given to use our own, and so allow the Holy Spirit no opportunity of guiding us with His.

Let us bury ourselves in the ocean of God's love.

The Lord guide the counsels of—— ! I am not afraid of any separation they can make. All they can do is to refuse to receive me. How much loss do I suffer by this ? They cannot shut me out from Christ. They cannot make me refuse to receive them. Let us bury ourselves deep in the great ocean of God's love, and the very small tempest they can raise will soon blow over without our noticing it.

The unchanging love of God.

I trust you keep well, and rejoicing in the unchanging love of God our heavenly Father. What emptyings of self we need, and what repeated revelations of His infinite excellence, to make us continually cleave to Him and trust in Him ! And that after Calvary !

Through mercy I keep well and busy and happy. I could not have a better Saviour, or be better loved, or have a surer or better hope ; and if self is a hateful enemy, it could not be more effectually disposed of than at the cross ; and if there are trials, they bring Christ with them, and they are welcome.

Dwelling in the love of God.

I am concerned at the trouble you have returned to among the little company of believers at home. Do not be over-anxious ; pray much ; get into the love of God and keep there. That will make your heart sweet, and your judgment unclouded. Then act quietly and

lovingly before God, and leave the issue to Him. He can make *all* troubles a blessing.

Walking worthy of the Lord.

"Walk worthy of the Lord" is a striking word from the Holy Spirit. Every line in a painting of Rembrandt's is worthy of that great artist; so every line in our tempers, words, and ways, ought to be worthy of the Lord, for we are *His* workmanship.

God's sure purpose.

It is God's will, and I delight in it even when it disappoints my hopes. As for God, His way is perfect; He has a purpose which He is steadily carrying out, and He is making all things work together to accomplish it. That purpose is that we may be conformed to the image of His Son, and—with all our perverseness and unbelief, and the thousand other things that we are ashamed of as we look back on our past lives—that purpose will one day be completely accomplished. How fine we shall be then! It will puzzle us to pick each other out in our new garments from the shining crowd of the redeemed!

The Body of Christ must be owned in its fragments.

Yes, I heard of the separation in ——. Setting up "churches" with high assumptions does not seem to come to much; God blows on it. "The body of Christ" must be owned in its fragments; for it will not, as I think, be set up again in any outward organization till "the Head" appears.

Largeness of heart.

The gain that I trust I have made by my long rest will be tested when I resume home-work ; this is with God, who gives what is good, and does all things well.

I was at — yesterday. After all the divisions the meetings were as large as ever, and it was quite refreshing to notice in intercourse with brethren there what increased largeness of heart God has granted them as the outcome of recent troubles.

The secret of usefulness.

Thank God, I am very well, both in soul and body. When one has such a Father as GOD there cannot be much to complain about ; He does all things well.

I suppose the secret of happiness and usefulness is in yielding ourselves entirely to God, and His meeting that surrender by taking possession of our yielded being by His Holy Spirit. If we hold back our tongues, or our brains, or our hands, or our time, how can the Holy Spirit take control of us ? He will not take these by force : “ *Yield yourselves unto God.* ”

Faith overcoming Christ.

Who can number all the favours a good and faithful God loads us with ! The inward blessings are the most precious by far. I trust you are both kept warm in heart by the love of God for you—the perfect love that gave Jesus to die for us.

We had smaller meetings than usual yesterday, but they were very happy ones. I preached in the evening on the Syro-Phœnician woman in Matt. xv., *who overcame Christ !* What a life-like and instructive story it is !

Daily loaded with benefits.

"Oh pity me this morning," R. C. Chapman once said to a friend, "I have such a load *burdening* me." "I am so sorry," the friend answered. "Yes," said Mr. Chapman, "but wait till you hear what my burden is—*He daily loadeth me with benefits.*" I also ought to be asking for sympathy under the same load.

God will uphold His own cause.

I trust you will be helped with ——. Be sure earnestly to ask God for help to keep perfectly unruffled in dealing with him or differing from him. I know that you desire only to maintain God's will, and He may be relied on to uphold His own cause.

Pray for us. We join in much love.

God's faithfulness.

I was very sorry to miss seeing you when I went back to Ballymena; you were specially remembered in our prayers. We had a happy time together—much talk of old times and of God's faithfulness; much also of His present work, and some earnest prayer.

On the previous Lord's-day we had good meetings; may fruit from them *remain*! On Monday evening we had a large Bible-reading in the Hall; I think nearly seventy were there, and I hope the conversation was useful. I spent all the time till Friday morning visiting brethren in their homes.

Counting on Divine Love.

I was *much* grieved not to be able to see dear — as she started for Africa. I had seen her, however, not long

before, and said farewell. The Lord keep her and daily load her with His benefits ! She has a true, simple, and loving heart.

How does your soul prosper ? Count on the love that gave Jesus to die for you, to help you continually to its utmost ability.

God an all-sufficient Help.

I trust your heart is delighting in God as your "exceeding joy." Before I left home I had a time of much spiritual defeat and depression, I am ashamed to say, as surely one ought to be who has such a very present and all-sufficient help to fly to. Thank God I am in a measure restored to my right senses again, trusting and rejoicing in the faithful Friend of so many years. What trouble I have caused Him ! What love He has shewn me ! We unite in kind wishes for all.

Always thankful, and for all.

It is easier to say "We thank Thee" for this bit of our life than for some other bits. *All* the ways of the Lord, however, are truth and mercy. May we learn to thank Him *always* for *all things*, seeing He has made us sure of His love for us by giving His Son !

The secret of growing younger.

I am glad you are finding joy and strength in God. What do they not lose who turn their backs on Him, and choose something else to satisfy their hearts ! "He satisfieth thy mouth with good things, so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's." This is the secret of daily growing younger.

Faith writes future history.

Accept our hearts' good wishes for the new year. We can say, "The Lord hath been mindful of us," and faith enables us to write future history, for we can add, "HE WILL *bless us*."

The rod is very gently used on us, and we bless God for it. It does us good.

Dear Mr. Morley is just crossing the line, if he is not already over it. He can hardly get through the night. With him it is well. Do not fail to pray for his sorrow-stricken wife. She is *so* worn; but patient and submissive, trusting God.

Enduring mercy.

"His mercy endureth for ever" occurred twenty-six times in yesterday morning's psalm. It has occurred much oftener in my life, and, thank God, will go on being repeated to the end.

The Holy Spirit's Ministry.

We all met yesterday at the Lord's-table and had a precious time together, with *Him* in our midst! I hardly remember enjoying any meeting more. How truly that word is fulfilled concerning the Holy Spirit, "He shall take of Mine and shall shew it unto you!" Who can tell the joy that comes into the heart as the Holy Spirit sheds God's love abroad in it?

On death with Christ to sin.

What did you think of M. E—'s charge against the great majority of Christians, that they *do not believe God* when He says "that they died with Christ to sin?" If he had

charged them with lying, or dishonesty, there would have been a ruffle of indignation through the whole meeting, but when it was only giving the lie in their hearts to one of God's statements, nobody seemed much concerned.

I much enjoyed my visit to Ireland. I believe if there were only men filled with the Holy Ghost and faith to preach, the people would eagerly gather to hear them. Self-judgment, and prayer, and counting on God, would remove mountains.

Almighty love moulds our lives.

Just a line of cordial congratulation on the return of your birthday, with our hearty good wishes. May to-morrow be a happy day, and the beginning of the best year of your life ! When an Almighty God—One too who loves us perfectly—has the moulding of us, and of our lives, ought we not to count on each day being better, and each year better, than the one that went before ? He honours God most who expects most from Him.

Make sure of daily time with God.

I trust that, in this difficult world, you are kept steadfastly abiding in Christ, and also that you have *Him* with you in your meetings. Exhort the Christians to make sure of their daily hour (or half-hour at any rate) *alone with God*. Their souls, and your meetings, will gain immensely.

His care is constant.

Thank you for your kind wishes for the new year. May it be a very happy one for you and Mr. —, under the constant care of "the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls." What a mercy, after all our unbeliefs, and dis-

obediencies, and manifold failures, in past years, that we begin this year trusting in the Almighty Friend who so loved us that He died for us ! May we trust Him more fully and obey Him more perfectly.

Sanctuary gladness.

How often we have occasion to speak of those two precious qualities of God—His faithfulness and loving-kindness.

We found out yesterday the little company who gather here to take the Lord's Supper together, and I was glad to help them with a few words about the old, yet ever new subject—the love of Christ that passeth knowledge.

I trust you keep well, and full of that strength which comes from the joy of the Lord—*sanctuary gladness*.

The joys outweigh the sorrows.

I hardly remember any former visit that I enjoyed more. The Lord was very good in every way. There *were* sorrows : but who escapes them ? Paul seems to describe them as lining the road that leads to the kingdom of God ; but the joys outweighed and still outweigh the troubles. Let us welcome them both, for both come from God.

God's bosom is our place of rest.

What a place God's bosom is, for such a wretch as you or me to live in ! Did you ever seek out the place where the little word "*me*" is put in Ps. xxv. 6,7 ? Just turn up the verses and look. It is so packed in among tender mercies and loving kindness that one can hardly find it out. And notice how carefully the sins of youth and transgressions are shut out from disturbing this "*me*" in its nestling place.

Forethought for Gospel work.

You know how we have to look before us a good way in making arrangements for gospel work in C—— H——, as in other places. It is a sign of present weakness, but I don't think that it is contrary to anything in the holy Scriptures. If a mightier power of the Holy Ghost came in there is nothing arranged among us to prevent our giving way to it. I only wish there were occasions for such giving way.

The best yet lies before us.

Accept my hearty thanks for the beautiful flowers with which you accompanied your own and your dear husband's kind wishes on my birthday. Thank him for his few lines, and for his gracious reminder that my best days, even at 73, are still before me. That, thank God, is true for him also, and for you, and *for all who are waiting for the Lord's return.*

Grace reigning.

I can speak well of the dear Friend who has stood by us both so long and so faithfully. When I have deserved least, He has often, in His infinite grace, treated me best. Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life.

Resting in God's bosom.

Don't think I "used lightness" when I thought of going over to see you. Why have I not done it then? Simply because my health has not suffered me. What a good thing when we are ill to have a kind heart near to care for us, and kind hands to tend us! And how much better still to be gathered to God's bosom, and sustained by His everlasting arms!

LETTERS READ TO CHRISTIANS AT CLAPTON HALL.

The two letters that follow were written to Christians assembled at two fellowship meetings at Clapton Hall, at which Mr. M'Vicker could not be present, but they are general in their character, and are of permanent value.

On shallow thoughts of Christ.

June 9th, 1891.

BELOVED BRETHREN,

In the providence of God I am unable to be among you this evening to speak to you face to face, as a short time ago I had expected to do. Yet I do not like our fellowship meeting to take place without sending you a few words of loving greeting, though another has to read them for me.

My heart's desire and prayer for all is that you may grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Without this you can neither glorify God, help your fellow-saints, nor be true witnesses for Christ to the perishing world. May I plead with you to make this deeper heart-acquaintance with Christ more distinctly your object?

He is the Eternal Son of the Living God; the brightness of God's glory; the One in whom all the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily.

Which of us knows Him as we should and might? Which of us has entered in heart as we might into the work accomplished for us by His stooping to become man, and dying for our sins on the cross, and being raised from the dead, and seated at God's right hand?

I am persuaded that poor and shallow thoughts of Christ, and His work, and His perfect love, hinder us in all directions. They hinder the fulness of our joy. They rob Christ of the entire love He deserves and longs for. This deeper knowledge of Christ and His work is all that is needed for more perfect consecration of ourselves to Him. It would be power to serve Him better ; it would open our lips to commend Him to others far more freely and effectually. The world would lose its charms for us if our hearts were more taken up with His perfect loveliness. Knowing Him better, our hearts would be more closely knit to one another and to all saints ; obedience to His commandments would be freedom and delight ; troubles and disappointments would lose their power to weigh us down and cause us perplexity and gloom. A heart that knows what it possesses in having Christ is happy anywhere.

The power of the hope of His return would grow with the growing knowledge of Himself ; everything in our Church life would advance ; we could not stay away from the Supper where He gives Himself to us to feed on ; we could not stay away from the prayer-meeting where we are His lips to ask things from God. If we could not publicly preach the gospel, we would delight to be where others were helped by the Holy Ghost to speak well of the One who was filling our hearts, and we would soon find opportunities there for dealing personally with souls.

Be assured, beloved brethren, that as all the varied wonders of the oak are contained in the acorn, so all advance in joy, in holiness, in service, in usefulness, is contained *in this one thing*—growth in heart-knowledge of Jesus Christ.

May I ask you, as I ask myself, Do you sufficiently make this your definite object ? Do you take the pains to attain it that it so well deserves ?

It ought to be an immense encouragement to us that the Holy Ghost has come for the very purpose of making Christ known to our hearts. But the Holy Ghost uses means. He manifests Christ to those *who keep Christ's words*—in whose hearts *Christ's words abide*.

My practical exhortation then to you, beloved brethren, is, to take sufficient time to get acquainted with Christ. Do not merely take time to *read* your Bibles; take time also TO MEDITATE. Turn your thoughts quietly and seriously to God; to His greatness; and to His love in sending His Son. Turn your thoughts to the character of Jesus; to His love in dying for you; and to the completeness of the deliverance wrought for you by His death and resurrection. And as you thus meditate, count on the Holy Ghost to help you, and to take the things of Christ and show them to your inmost hearts.

God is "the rewarder of them who diligently seek Him." "If thou seekest as for silver, and searchest as for hid treasures, THEN shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God." This, be assured, is the way to change gloom into sunshine, and weakness into strength: and to turn our life from a succession of humiliating and sorrowful defeats into one unbroken triumph in Christ.

Pray "for all saints—and for me also."

J. G. M'VICKER.

The high standing of the Church of God.

June 29th, 1897.

BELOVED BRETHREN,

Away from you in person, I am yet with you in your meeting to-night in spirit, and desire through pen and paper to say to you a few things that are in my heart.

Let me recall the high standing of the Church of God, to which, through grace, you belong. Its place is with its Head in heaven, sharing all the love, all the nearness to God, all the unsearchable riches in which He stands for ever. From all eternity you were chosen by the free grace of God to this place of perfect acceptance before Him, into which, by the sacrifice of His own Son, He has brought you. The grace that has brought you there is engaged to maintain you, through your faith and watchfulness and prayer, till the return of our blessed Lord Jesus. And when He returns, and

all things in heaven and earth are gathered together in one in Him, what tongue can tell the glories that will belong to His Bride—His body—the vessels in which all the fulness of His grace now dwells, and in which all the fulness of His glory will be revealed?

I especially write this to you because you have been led of God to withdraw from the various denominations of a sadly divided Christendom, to own nothing but the one body of Christ—the Church of the Living God—which He has purchased with His own blood.

What do I mean by this? I mean that you disown as brethren all who do not belong to Christ, and acknowledge all who do belong to Him. The Holy Ghost alone can add to the body of Christ. You have not joined yourselves to the denomination that you thought the most scriptural; the Holy Ghost has joined you to the body of Christ.

I mean further that you have not looked to theological seminaries and popular election for evangelists, pastors and teachers. You have sought practically to own that these are gifts from the living Head, bestowed by His Holy Spirit on the Church, whose place is thankfully to accept and own His gifts. You have owned the same Supreme Will that forms the Church and bestows gifts on it, as presiding in your assemblies. The Church is the body in which the Holy Ghost dwells; and through which the Holy Ghost acts. Man's choosing, man's will, has no place there. Christ is to be owned as Lord over His own house.

Let me repeat it. You do not meet as a Christian denomination claiming to be a little more closely in accordance with Scripture than other denominations around you. You seek to disown all denominations—because division among Christians is not of God—and to own the body of Christ, joined to the one Head, acknowledging Him as Lord, dear as He is to the Father, and indwelt and guided by the one Holy Spirit, who seals us till the day of redemption. Let me beseech you to study the Epistle to the Ephesians as you have never studied it yet—till all the wonderful glories of that most wonderful

epistle shine in on your souls, and fill you with praise and worship, and you see in that epistle how those to whom such grace belongs, and for whom such glory is provided, ought in the meantime to behave themselves.

(1) As belonging to the new creation, as children of the resurrection, put off the old man with all his evil works, and put on the new man. Do not merely strive against sin ; reckon yourselves dead to sin. Do not merely strive to be holy ; “ Be ye holy, as I (with whom you are risen) am holy.”

(2) Be *most* watchful not to grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by allowed sin, by neglected confession if you do sin, by that most subtle and dangerous of all sins—unbelief.

(3) Walk in love. Christianity without love is a hollow and lifeless pretence. Do not make your brethren's faults an excuse for speaking evil of them or ceasing to love them. God loves us in spite of all our faults, and He knows them *all*.

(4) Walk in the light, as always under the eye of our dear God and Father, doing and saying nothing that needs darkness to hide in.

(5) Cultivate the spirit of continual thanksgiving. Avoid murmuring and discontent. Sons and daughters of the Living God and yet murmuring !

(6) Make your place in Christ the standard and motive for behaviour in family life—husbands loving their wives as Christ loves the Church ; wives loving and reverencing their husbands as the Church does Christ ; children obeying their parents as to the Lord ; parents training their children in the Lord's nurture and admonition ; servants acting faithfully as always under the great Master's eye ; masters treating their servants as those who know they have a Master in heaven.

(7) Finally put on, and keep on, the complete armour of God—the truth, the righteousness, the peace made by the cross and proclaimed in the gospel, with steadfast faith in God, in His salvation, and in the living Word of God. Without these how can you keep your position in heavenly places, or resist the hosts of evil spirits that continually seek to cast you down ?

And very especially remember that closing word in Eph. vi,

"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints." Without real prayer, without close heart-communion maintained with God, all acquaintance in the letter and intellect with truth about the church and about our heavenly standing, will be of no practical profit. Knowledge puffs up. It is only useful and only safe when prayer keeps the soul lying humbly at the feet of God.

Do not forget to pray for me, beloved brethren, as through grace I seek from my heart thus to remember you, and to obtain for you the help which in the midst of your difficulties, and sorrows, and temptations, I know you need.

Yours affectionately in Christ,

J. G. M'VICKER.

Extract from a letter of Mr. M'Vicker's read at Clapton Hall at the meeting preceding his burial.

The Fount of blessing still remains.

And Moody is gone! The greatest living force in Gospel testimony taken from us! Spurgeon, and Gordon and Müller, and Moody—who are to fill their places? He who gave them and took them can give others. "My Spirit remaineth among you; fear ye not." Some one (John Foster?) said that no one like Robert Hall would arise after him. Carlyle said (virtually) that if Chalmers were gone, no one would advocate Christ like him. Yet Spurgeon came. Who will follow Moody? God will not repeat Himself. One of a new pattern will be given us. May it be *many*!

"HE, BEING DEAD, YET SPEAKETH."